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AMIGA User INTERNATIONAL

CONSTANT FACTORS

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Managing Editor Antony Jacobson claims that he's just an innocent bystander - it's not me, guv! - when the total confusion of the home computer world strikes and leaves him, and probably us, wondering what will happen next.

8 SuperDisks No.73 and No.74
This month, in addition to the delights of the usual crop of the cream of Amiga utilities, the ***AUI*** SuperDisks contain a selection of pictures for use with last month's M.M. Experience authoring program from Optonica. Plus some samples thrown in for good measure. A joyous bundle to give your Amiga. Imdad Shah and David Ward provide the goodies and the guidance.

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Where the news is, there they nose. Nothing stops ***AUI***'s fearless NewsFile newshounds, Anthony Mael and Martin Witton. Once they are on the trail they follow it into the darkest and most dubious corners of computerdom. That is unless someone offers them a beer and a dog biscuit, in which case they'll hang around until the beer and possibly the trail cools. This month they sniff out a Amiga Technologies CD-ROM drive and report on the forthcoming 604 PowerPC Amiga. All computer life is here, including a plethora of their notorious Quotes of the Month.

78 Amiga Answers
If you have a technical question, if your Amiga is keeping you awake at night and makes you want to sneeze, wheeze, or buckle at the knees see, or rather write to, the Answer Doctor. The Amiga Answer Machine himself, none other than Andy (Give me your set up) Eskelson. The Man Who Knows is ***AUI***'s answer to a world of problems - your problems. Like so many others have done, you too can ask him to solve them for you. And he will.

99 The PD Stakeout
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Despite being desperately ill, you crawled down the road, coughing and spluttering, to get to your local newsagent for a copy of *AUI*. They were sold out. Of course. You should have subscribed, shouldn't you? You still want that issue? Here it is - put aside just for you, and your £5.

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How and why to subscribe to the world's longest established Amiga magazine - and there is an astounding free offer of Datachrome too. What did Sarah-Jane Clifford-Jones have to do to get this for such a generous special offer?

103 Arena
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51 The Octopus Under Your Feet *Part II*

Something stange is happening. As Michael Rumbelow, leading the *AUI* team, explained in last month's Part I. The whole country is being invaded underground by an octopus of cabling, much of it fibre optic.

In this, the second and concluding part, he exposes the growing power of the cabled world and suggests what you can you do about it.

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Where you can find those who want you to know what you want to buy when you need something to help you know more about the Amiga.

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The Amiga Dimension

What is going to happen in this electronic world? In the NewsFile this month, we have a quote from the Editor of a Playstation magazine, in effect, that everything went right for the launch of Sony's "next generation" games console. The comment was made probably because the Playstation outsold the previously launched Sega Saturn, with reported sales of 50,000 in the UK and 300,000 in the USA, both figures probably doubling those claimed for the Saturn. Personally, though, I think the claims for both machines unlikely.

The Playstation launch "success" caused the Sega machine to be slashed in price to £299 in the UK and $299 in the USA, still not exactly cheap compared to the old hand-helds that swept the world. Yet no sooner have we seen the two "next generation" machines finally emerge from hype to reality, than Nintendo announces that its 64-bit Ultra is almost upon us. And when Nintendo "a.k.a. Godzilla" speaks, the games world trembles.

Then there is the stories that Atari, with the failure to sell large quantities of the Jaguar, is about to pull out of hardware, and 3DO is to sell its hardware copyright to Matsushita - probably the largest electronics company in the world whose brand, Panasonic, is a global power.

Another global power, possibly an even stronger one, Microsoft, has just effectively "relaunched" the PC as a games machine which, they say thanks to Windows 95, will offer arcade-style and quality gameplay with a simplification of use through the much vaunted Plug and Play system.

There is an upheaval in the whole field of "home" machines. And where is the Amiga in all this kerfuffle? Well... Escom have announced that they are going to sell the Amiga through their High Street shops in the UK and may well do the same in Germany. They are also going to bring out a CD-ROM drive for the 1200. Wow! Oh yes, and Commodore PCs are intended to grab 5% of the PC market in the UK. Oh, Commodore, sorry, that hasn't anything to do with us anymore.

The selling of the Amiga through Escom's chain of ex-Rumbelow stores may be a good idea, but industry sources suggest that it is a response to a difficulty with distributors for other outlets, rather than an enthusiasm for the computer itself. Some interesting and possibly better news is that Amiga Technologies has decided upon using Motorola's 604 PowerPC chips in the next Amigas, which could be licensed technology from Apple who are already permitting PowerPC clones. It is RISC technology and it does work.

However, with all the marketing and technical muscle behind the Sega/Sony/Nintendo/3DO pure and simple entertainment machines, it would seem unlikely that the Amiga, with a real computer character as opposed to the dedicated consoles, would get a look in for its traditional games market where once it had only to compete with the Atari ST. That is unless the next Amigas could take such a technological leap forward that they would be better than the competition - and that would take some doing when you think of the massively resourced, and now entirely Japanese opposition.

If the Amiga goes to the other side, as the real computer it is, it might stand a chance against the PC, but another item in the NewsFile about Gold Disk, the creators of ProPage, tells sadly of their desertion of the Amiga for Windows. A story that is true of virtually all the once fine Amiga developers. To get them back would require an effort that, up to now, Escom have not shown they are interested in attempting.

Even if that were to happen, a provocative report into Multimedia in the Home does not make enthralling reading for PC manufacturers like Escom. The report, from Inteco, an international market research company, says that "The home PC boom is in one sense illusory." For the most part, it seems, PC sales in the UK were going to existing users, either as replacement or additional machines.

Inteco's research shows that the majority of multimedia PC owners are "wealthy males" and suggests that the prospects for convergence of PC and TV are overstated. It also says that "the euphoria in the PC world is misplaced, as there are major problems that will inhibit growth in PC usage." It even indicates there may be a " backlash in public attitude."

Now isn't that something of a facer for those who think, or hope, the PC is going to take over the world? Inteco could be wrong, but there are also predictions about major public resistance to the "next generation" consoles because their prices are so much higher than previous games machines.

So what is going to happen in this electronic world where confusion reigns, at least in the "home machine" market? Don't ask me, I'm only an innocent bystander. And don't bother to ask Amiga Technologies, or any of the others either, they're just hoping and possibly praying that it will sort itself out in their favour.

Antony Jacobson
Managing Editor

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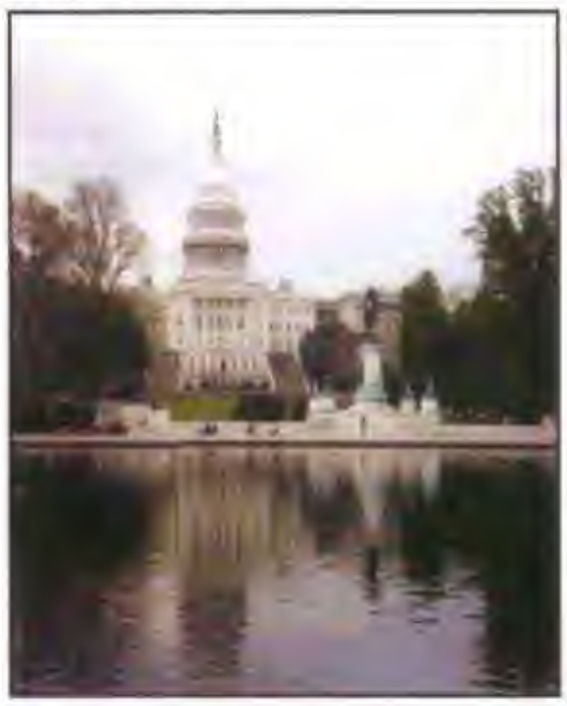
Amiga User INTERNATIONAL

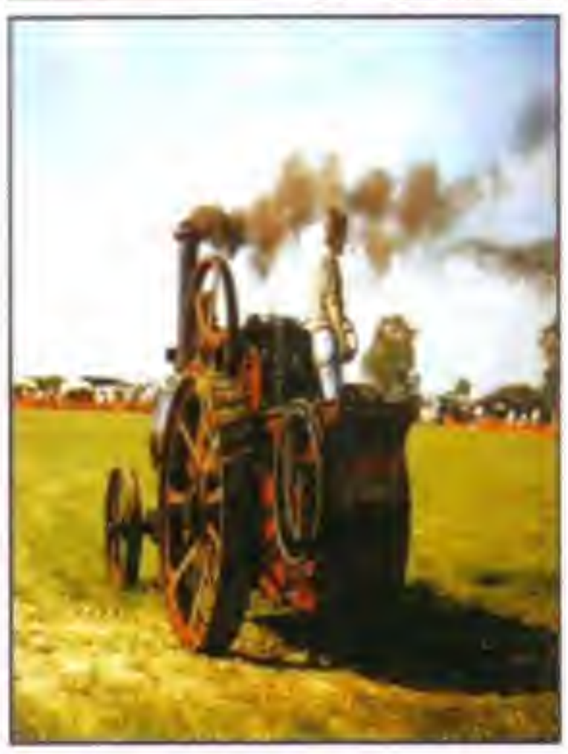
As well as our usual excellent gathering of utilities to help you get the most out of your Amiga, this month we bring you, as promised, some support files for Optonica's M.M. Experience, the full multimedia program that was included in December's SuperDisks. Imdad Shah and David Ward did the compiling, checking and checking... and now explain how easy and thrilling it all is.

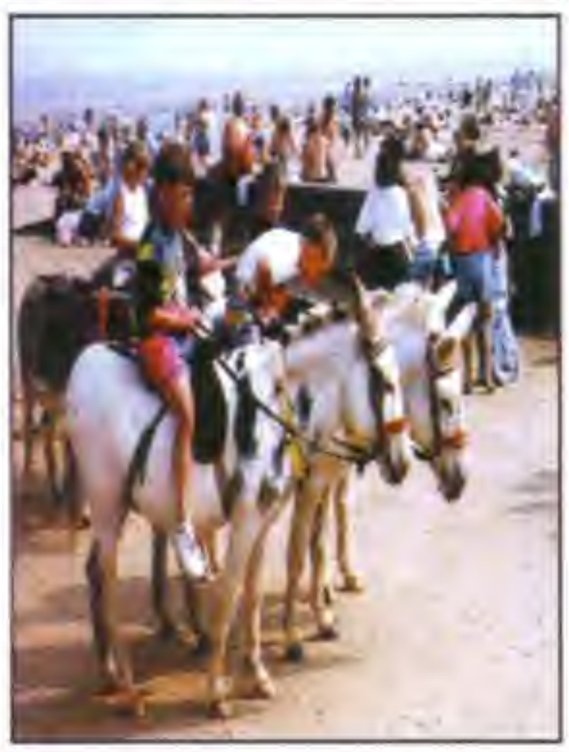
SuperDisk 73

The Perfect Pictures Disk

Half a dozen high quality HAM interlace pictures for you to enjoy, or use in conjunction with the M.M.Experience program we gave away last month. These can be accessed straight from Workbench as they have not been compressed.







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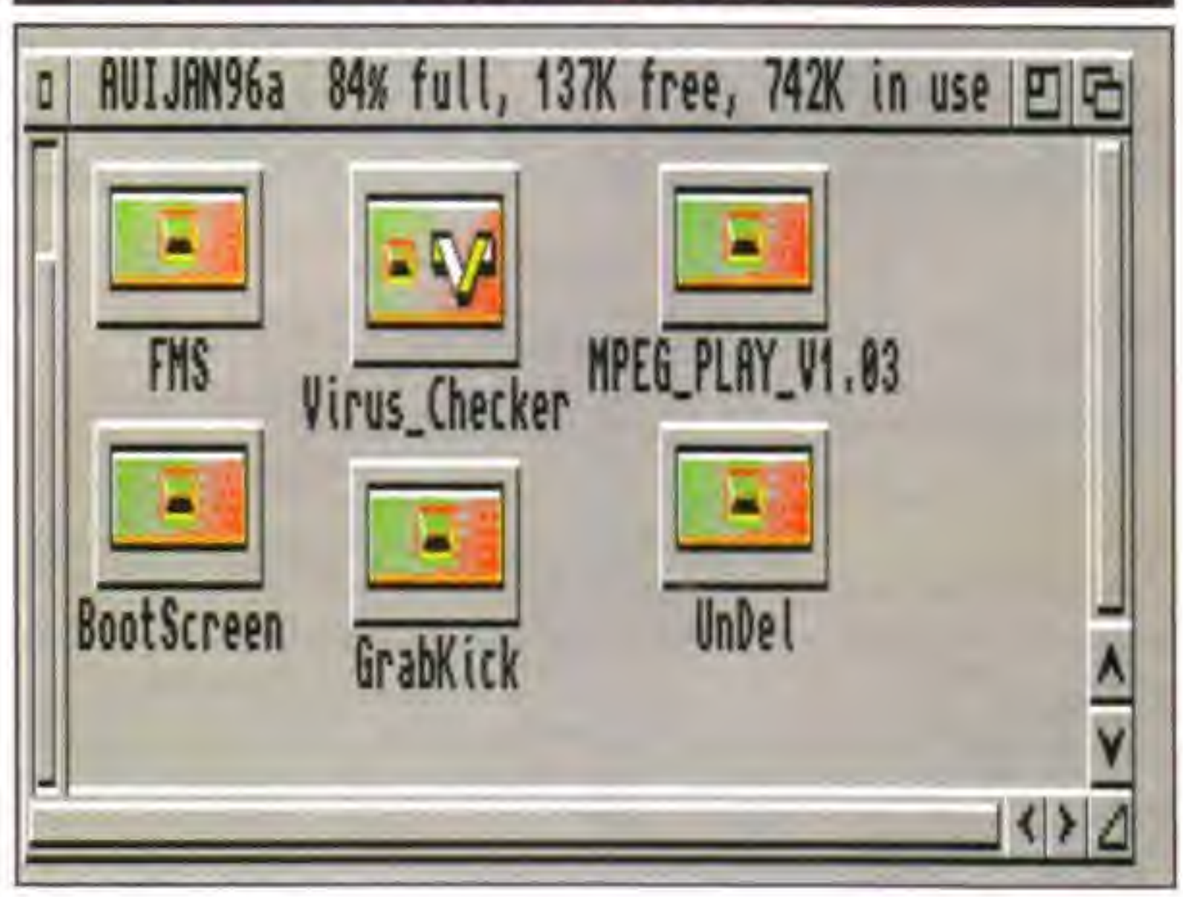


SuperDisks No. 73 & No. 74

The AUI Utilities Disk No.1

BootScreen

Fed up with looking at a blank screen during the early stages of your Amiga's boot sequence? Then why not display a picture. BootScreen is just the utility for you, and it comes complete with an example IFF.

FMS

Developers often need to create test disks for their software. However a floppy is not the fastest of devices, and they find themselves spending ages formatting and writing to these slow devices. Enter FMS.

This is a file based floppy simulator. Created on your hard disk, FMS can be used as if you had a floppy in an external drive. It is also useful if you want to run some software from your hard disk which usually only likes to run from df0:

GrabKick

This piece of software allows you to grab an image of the ROM fitted in your, or someone else's, Amiga. When used in conjunction with a relocation program, you can soft-boot another Kickstart - say 2.1 on a 1.3 machine, providing you have enough ram of course. Great for developers.

MPEG_PLAY

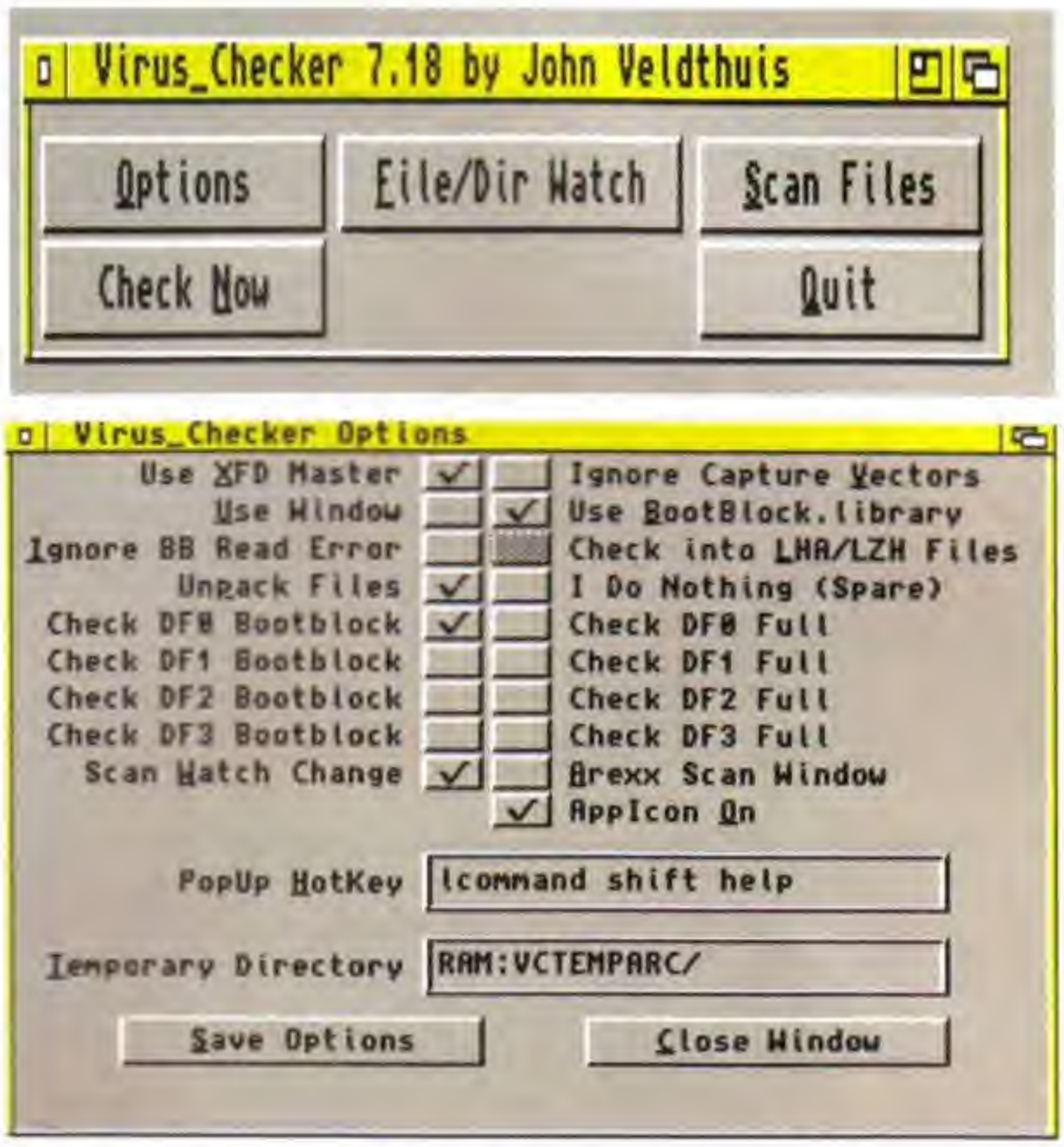
Quite a few anims produced in 24-bit rendering packages are now appearing. These have often been saved as an MPEG file. Now you can view them using this software decoder. It may be slow, speed and resolution depends on the power of your Amiga's processor, but it can be fun. If enough of you ask nicely we might include the anim of the topless Italian housewives on the next SuperDisk.

UnDel

"Whoops. I shouldn't have done that." How many times have you said that when you accidentally deleted an important file. UnDel can quickly come to the rescue and help you recover the lost item.

VirusChecker 7.18

Here is the latest version of the world famous virus protection utility. Easily installed and controlled as a Commodity, using hotkeys, or via Arexx. Virus Checker has saved the day on many an occasion. Remember, to get the best out of VC you must register it.



SuperDisk 74

The AUI Utilities Disk No.2

Arq

Here it is again, in case you missed it first time round, the ultimate in replacement requesters. Simple to install, Arq provides you with more interesting, animated, messages than those given by Workbench.

Included with Arq is Upd, a tiny sound sample player that Arq uses to give you audible warnings when something happens. It will need a

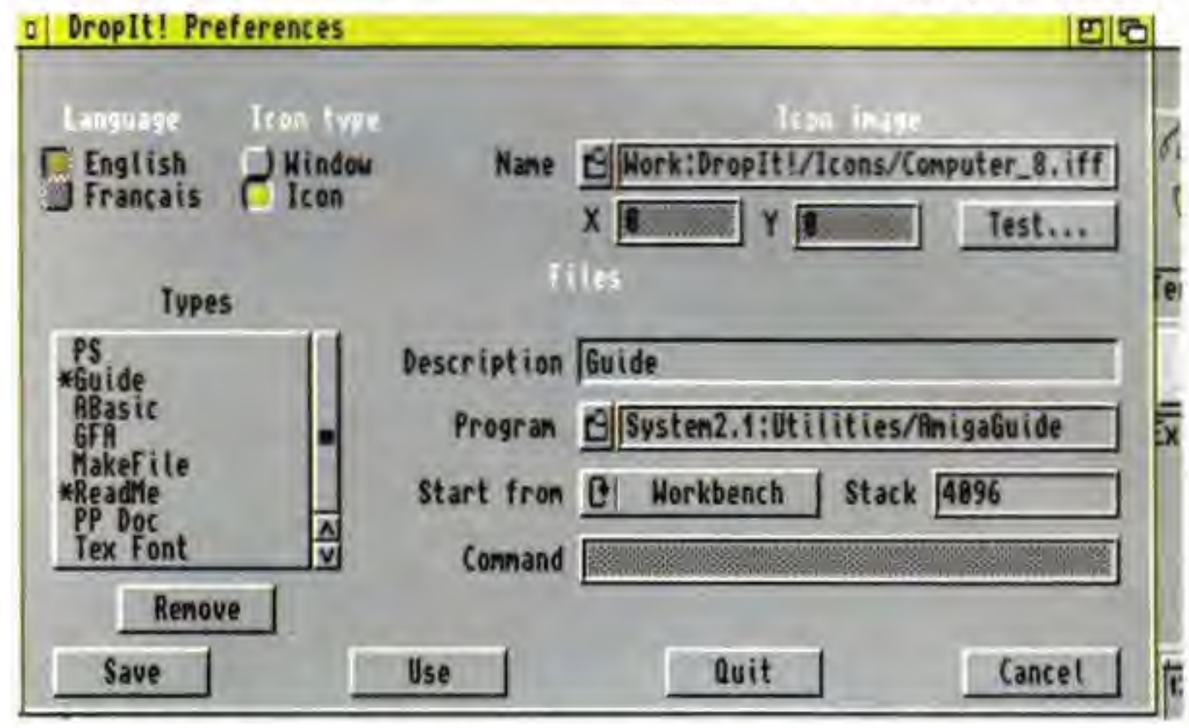
little configuring, but when it's all up and running you will be impressed. Hint - some of the samples on **AUI**Jan96c are ideal for this purpose.

CacheClock

Looking at the interface for this program I was immediately reminded of Facc II - the floppy accelerator by Perry Kivolowitz, the man who wrote AdPro. Anyway this is not by him.

CacheClock works by remembering what your Amiga read from a floppy, like a directory, so that if you access it again the data can be supplied from ram without having to re-read the disk. And it tells you the time and memory usage too!

DropIt!



Don't like directory managers? Prefer to use Workbench? Then DropIt! could be just the util if you have to wade through dozens of icons on disks. Once configured DropIt! allows you to drag icons onto its AppIcon and, hey presto, the file is acted upon. If it is a picture, it is shown. A text file is displayed, while an Amigaguide document is loaded into Amigaguide.

A number of additional utilities are provided - ShowILBM, ShowText, PlaySample, and Decrunch - which handles PowerPacked and Lha'd files.

MEM-Handler and MeMon

Two little items for the dedicated hacker. MEM-Handler allows you to manipulate ram directly from the operating system, while MeMon not only acts as a programmer's calculator, but also alter memory addresses.

PictSaver

My favourite utility for grabbing the screenshots used in this very magazine. PictSaver must first be configured as to where it is going to save its results. Then, once that is done, you can grab most screens, windows, or icons.

By simply pressing [Crtl]-[Left Shift]-[Left Alt], you cause crosshairs to appear on screen. Now, by holding down the left mouse button, you can draw around what you want to grab. Let go of the button and your picture is saved as a standard IFF, consecutive saves are correspondingly numbered.

SlowEcho

Amazed at how we print text to the screen when you are unpacking the SuperDisks? SlowEcho can be made to display text at various speeds. Now you can play at being the football results printer on Grandstand.

TinyClock

A tiny clock configurable to your own preferences. Say no more.

AUIJan96c

The Smashing Samples Disk

Here are twenty samples ideal for use within M.M. Experience, coupled to Arq, or maybe just for fun. You can use Upd or DropIt! to play them back if you have not got a sample player of your own. ***AUI***

Quantum exclusively offer 'VIDI Amiga' Capture Solutions by rombo

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VISA

DISK INFORMATION

Additional Information

Floppy Users

You can install to any disk except this month's SuperDisk. When prompted, insert your spare disk into df0:, the internal drive. The time taken to install a disk varies.

Hard Drive Users

Now you can install directly to your hard drive. Boot SuperDisk No.73 as you do for floppy installation, and select the disk you wish to install. When asked whether you wish to install to floppy or hard drive, select 'h'. You will be given a list of available devices and the space on them. Bear in mind that over 2 and a half Megs of space are required to install the whole set of disks.

The SuperDisks will install an exact copy of the floppy disk, **AUI**JAN96x, to a subdirectory of that name. This includes startup-sequences et al. Delete any unnecessary files. Note also that the icon information default tool in the documents will need changing or the reader 'least' will need copying from the c directory in the subdirectory to the c directory on the partition you have installed to (not necessarily sys:c directory).

You cannot install to any path that contains the following letter sequence: "df", "pc", "ds", "ram", "cd". This is to avoid any confusion with other Amiga devices. It is not a good idea to have partitions/directories called this anyway.

Expert Users

The installation directly to hard drive should mean that manual installation would take you longer now. It therefore seems little point detailing this. Should you wish to, remember that SuperDisk No.74 is a diskspare disk and requires this device to read them and that the commands are stored in superdisk74:c/commands.lzx.

Viruses

During the production of our coverdisks the disks were constantly checked for quality. While disks are checked for viruses, it is always safer to virus check the disk prior to installation.

Shutters

Prior to installation you should check the shutter of the disk to ensure that it has not been damaged in transit. This is best done by gently sliding the shutter to the left and allowing it to spring back. Please note that ***AUI*** nor Publisher cannot be deemed liable for any problems arising from use of the disk.

Disk Return

In the unlikely event your disk is damaged or simply doesn't run, please return it to the duplicator, Tib PLC, Tib House, 11 Edward Street, Bradford, BD4 7BH, (who may be contacted on 01274 736990) together with a stamped addressed envelope. Where it is a duplication fault, the postage will be returned along with the replacement disk.

Technical Support

Ring our duplicator's technical support line on 0891 715929 (weekdays 10.00am - 12.30pm, 1.30pm - 4.40pm). They may be able to offer useful advice. Calls are charged at 39p per minute cheap rate and 49p at all other times. Please ensure you have the permission of the phone owner before making the call.

A Plea

We have gone to every effort to make the SuperDisk easy to use and to ensure that all the programs work on as many systems as possible.

We regret that we cannot take any telephone calls concerning SuperDisk problems. They are just too time consuming and then we wouldn't have time to put the next SuperDisk together for you.

If you do have a problem, try the docs again and refer to your manual, should you need to move any libraries or assign any programs. If you are truly stuck, please write to Amiga Answers.

BBSs

Much Gratitude to Jimbob, the supportive Sysop of the excellent Waltons' Mountain BBS, on 0181 891 5730. Faulty Towers shouldn't be omitted, available on 01235 535113. If you want to be truly international, then check out the splendid American BBS Smorgasboard, on 205 745 3989.

Readers' Contributions

AUI's SuperDisks are crammed with the cream of Amiga crop. Many of the programs are created especially for us and released into the Public Domain through ***AUI***. It's you the reader that makes it possible for ***AUI*** to continue to share top quality software with tens of thousands of avid Amiga users.

If you have a masterpiece that you think can cut it with the best, send it to: SuperDisk Contributions, Amiga User International Magazine, Unit 2, Utopia Village, 7 Chalcot Road, London NW1 8LX. Alternatively, you can send your programs uuencoded by email to amigauser@cix.compulink.co.uk.

It's best for us if you don't use Powerpacker, because we use LZX to archive, which is far more efficient. It will also help if you tell us which libraries or fonts your program requires, keeping them to a minimum if possible. So, if you're sending an AMOS program for example, try to avoid the need to have the AMOS library separately. These guidelines make life jolly for everyone.

Happy compiling!

Shareware

Just a brief reminder that some of the programs on our Coverdisk are Shareware. This means that you can try them out, but if you regularly use them you should send a registration fee to the author. Registration fees are between £5 and £20 and sometimes the author will send you the latest version in return. You can send an International Money Order, or preferably a cheque but many authors don't accept cheques if they are outside the UK. If you want to risk sending cash in a registered post, it's up to you. We wouldn't advise it but it's your money...

Note that some of the authors don't want anything more than a postcard from you so they can see how far their programs have travelled. So, why not make their day. After all, they made yours.

Compatibility

These SuperDisks are WorkBench 2 and above only, and require one Meg of Chip RAM or more. We deem this to be the minimum spec Amiga used nowadays. That doesn't mean that we aren't aware of users with 1.3 Amigas. The reason is simply that most new programs, certainly those developed by PD programmers, require WorkBench 2 and because it allows us to give about a further 300-400K of data. Getting over four Megs onto two disks isn't possible with OFS disks and decrunching them would require more floppy disks on your part. WorkBench 2 gives much more than a new WorkBench disk, it powers up your Amiga, radically renovating your Operating System. The only option for 1.3 users is to upgrade. The cost is negligible (c.£50), and is more than worth it for the wealth of new programs on offer and for the money you'll save on floppy disks!

All the programs on these disks work on an A1200 and most on an Amiga 500+. The best way to check is to read the docs and try the game. Should you require additional libraries for the program, they should be enclosed in the program directory and you need to copy them to your libs:directory on your WorkBench disk.

Read your WorkBench manual for instructions on doing this.

Should it all go horribly wrong, please WRITE to Amiga Answers at the address shown in the Answers section. DO NOT RING! We cannot answer queries over the 'phone. Sorry.

Documentation

All the plain documents can be read simply by double clicking on their icons. The text will scroll, use the mouse to control it and press Escape to quit. If the docs are in AmigaGuide format, you'll need a computer that can read AmigaGuide files in order to read them without all the nodes showing.

The docs can also be loaded into any Word Processor that reads ASCII, which is just about all of them.

He's Back...

Following on from the original ground-breaking Squirrel SCSI Interface, HiSoft is proud to announce Surf Squirrel. Offering even higher SCSI performance, auto-booting, and an ultra-fast serial port, Surf Squirrel is the ideal expansion peripheral for your Amiga A1200. Squirrel is also the only SCSI expansion that is hot plug and unplug, requires no opening of your Amiga, no technical knowledge and does not invalidate your warranty! Contact HiSoft for more information on the amazing Surf Squirrel.

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Order your Zip drive now to avoid disappointment!

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Zip drives from HiSoft include everything you need to get going on a SCSI-aware Amiga: the Zip 100 drive, a 100Mb cartridge, all necessary leads and a complete set of software, programmed by HiSoft, including:

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- *The great-looking Atwa ACD-300 CD-ROM drive; a fast, double-speed CD-ROM with full SCSI specification plus complete audio controls on the front so that you can play music CDs directly. Plus an informative LCD panel.*
- *The Almathera 10-on-10 pack of CDs: this is 10 CDs including the Team Yankee game, 2000 clip-art images, the Illustrated Works of Shakespeare, a Comms, Internet & Networking CD, The World Vista Atlas, 1000s of fonts, a complete photo library and much, much more!*

All this, packaged together, at a truly superb price, with full 1 year warranty and technical support from HiSoft.

MPEG COMPATIBLE

Disk Magic £39.95

Newly released, Disk Magic (screenshot on the left), is the ultimate file and disk management utility for your Amiga. DiskMAGIC makes every task you perform - from the copying of a file, to the extraction of an archived file, as simple as a clicking on a button! In fact, after using DiskMAGIC, you'll wonder how you ever used you Amiga without it!

DiskMAGIC is exceptionally configurable, with the ability to alter window layout, file types, action buttons, fonts, screen mode, archive handling, viewers and more.

DiskMAGIC is compatible with all Amigas running WB2 (or higher) and with 1.5MB or more of free memory.

AURA £99.95

As music experts (all sampler products are our own design, built and programmed in the UK), you can trust HiSoft to deliver the right package for you; a professional Midi interface (ProMidi £24.95), a great-value, 8-bit direct-to-disk sampler (Megalosound £24.95) or a superb quality 12/16-bit stereo, direct-to-disk PCMCIA unit (Aura), both samplers have superb real-time effects.

Termite £39.95

Afraid of becoming a hedgehog on the Information Super Highway? Don't worry! Termite is so easy to use that even a first time telecommunicator will feel at home.

Termite is 100% WB2 Style Guide compliant and provides you with all of the modern user interface features to really enjoy playing in the highway!

Termite supports both the Amiga XPR and XEM libraries as well as having its own internal ZModem. Termite is compatible with all Amigas running WB2 (or higher) with 1MB or more of free memory and all modems.

Cinema4D £199.95

This exciting new package is available at the amazingly-low price of only £199.95, Cinema4D is set to revolutionise the 3D-rendering and animation market.

Cinema4D provides an easy-to-use multi-tasking editor, replete with every conceivable option including multi-window editing, interactive modelling, direct modelling in 3D, basic and complex primitives, easy object manipulation, hierarchies, an optimised FPU/CPU version and much more!

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Bring the cinema into your home and into your computer with Squirrel MPEG. Playing the popular VideoCD and CDI CD-ROMs, Squirrel MPEG brings high quality digitally mastered images and 16-bit stereo sound to you and your Amiga. Squirrel MPEG is a SCSI peripheral that can be used in conjunction with any SCSI controller, such as the Squirrel, and any VideoCD compatible CD-ROM*. Squirrel MPEG can also be used as a stand-alone unit as an addition to your TV, Video and Hi-Fi setup.

**Squirrel MPEG requires a SCSI CD-ROM that is CDi® (Green Book) or VideoCD (White Book) compatible. Check your CD-ROM supplier for compatibility details.*

Order Hotline

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To order any of the products shown on this page (or any other HiSoft title) - just call us, free of charge, on **0500 223660**, armed with your credit or debit card; we will normally despatch within 4 working days (£4 P&P) or, for only £6 within the UK, by guaranteed next day delivery (for goods in stock). Alternatively, you can send us a cheque or postal orders, made out to HiSoft. All prices include VAT. Export orders: please call or fax to confirm pricing and postage costs.

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New! Money Matters 4

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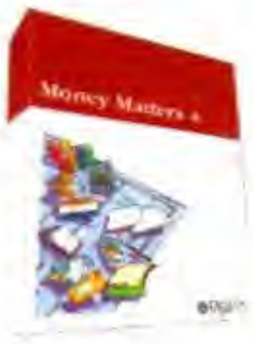
- Low price upgrade! Call for details.
- Requires Workbench 2 or above, floppy or hard disk, 1MB RAM.



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Wordworth News–the new arrival

"I have made some very nerve wracking decisions in my lifetime—joining Her Majesties Forces—Parachuting—volunteering for near impossible things—but one of the best decisions I have ever made was to buy Wordworth!"

When Amiga Technologies wanted the best word processor, it demanded Digita Wordworth—the best-selling Amiga word processor in the world. Wordworth 4SE, created in English, German, French and Italian, is now included with every Amiga. So, then, the world's most popular word processor becomes even more popular!

Existing Wordworth users can now look forward to Wordworth 5, and, provided you're registered, you'll receive full upgrade details in November. New features include ARexx, Fast Format,™ FontEffects,™ footnotes, style sheets and much more. Best of all, the upgrade costs just £29.99!

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ALL PRICES INCLUDE VAT. PLEASE ADD £3 FOR POSTAGE AND PACKAGING.

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Compiled and edited by Anthony Mael and Martin Witton with help from David Ward

Commodore Returns

Escom, having bought the Commodore name, is attempting to major on it solely for PC-related products which are now beginning reach the retail shelves of their chain of stores. Mike Poeckling, Commodore BV MD told ***AUI*** that Commodore will regain its market position by coming in at prices up to "20% lower than other equivalent top brands".

The aim is to grab 5% of the European PC market in three years with the Commodore brand name, concentrating efforts on an "affordable line of Pentium multimedia PCs and accessories." The line is called "Commodore GO" not "Golf" as was originally suggested by Escom.

Former Commodore UK staff are sceptical about Escom's chances of success having lost the momentum while other PC manufacturers have surged ahead. Andrew Ball, former Commodore PR Boss, now director of PR firm Insight said "Commodore was always associated with the Amiga in this country. It was never a PC brand in the UK and it never had a good name in this country among corporates." Andrew Ball is not strictly accurate in saying that it was "never a PC brand". It was and for a time did almost reach that magic 5% of the UK market. In Germany it had as much as 26% of the total PC market at one time.

But don't mention 5% to the Editor of ***AUI***. He glares and swears and groans. Going back ten years to the time of a chap called Howard Stanforth, the then Marketing Manager of CBM, when they were in Slough and then Corby, who, with Paul Welch, also Marketing Manager and now of Atari, 5% of the total PC market was the proudly announced aim. And, the Editor points out, it was then confidently proclaimed the target of every CBM boss up to the time when CBM finally admitted defeat and dropped the PC and concentrated on the Amiga.

Another reason that the Editor may not be entirely convincible about the magic of the Commodore name in the UK for PCs was that this very publication started as, there are no doubt a few of you out there who will remember, none other than Commodore Business Magazine. It was because CBM had launched a a new range of PCs - destined, they claimed blithely, for that elusive 5% of the market.

When the Amiga 1000 was launched, as you will recall as a business computer, the name of this publication changed to Commodore Business and Amiga Magazine and then... But that's history, isn't it?

Commodore PCs to get 5%? Whisper it very quietly indeed, Mr. Peockling, if you are passing the Editor of ***AUI***'s office - you can recognise the door by the steam coming out of the CBM-logo shaped keyhole.

Phoenix Price Cut

Abcon Computer Services have told ***AUI*** about their great Xmas and New Year promotion on their Phoenix inkjet refill kits. By buying direct from them you can save more than 10% off of retailer's normal prices.

A standard refill kit, containing two syringes of black ink, will set you back £7.99. While a high capacity kit, with twice as much ink as the standard, goes for £9.99. These prices include post and packing.

Abcon also do a tri-colour kit for £11.99, and bottles of Cleaning Solution (£3.49) and Head Recovery Fluid (£5.99) - designed to unblock those nozzles.

The Phoenix products are said to work with ALL makes of inkjet printer, so Canon users should be able to refill their cartridges without worry.

Fashionable 600s

IBM are preparing for a six month delay before the 620 version of the PowerPC chip is completely ready. Apple are said to have also had problems with the early 620s because of difficulties in running the Mac operating system properly. Rumours were rife concerning the demise of the chip following Motorola's recent decision to abandon development of the 615 - a PowerPC chip with built-in Windows compatibility.

The cheaper 604 device continues to power the entire Apple range, and speculation increases as to who will eventually take over Apple. IBM are a strong contender.

In Japan, Mitsubishi Electric have joined Apple and games company Bandai in a multimedia alliance. They plan to produce equipment using the PowerPC 603 and Apple's Pippin operating system to access the Internet, play games and CDs, and word-process.

While in America, at the recent Video Toaster conference, Amiga Technologies announced that the next generation of Amigas are to be called Power Amiga. That's right - the RISC Amiga is going to be PowerPC. See page 28.

Virtually Silica

Looking at the troubles of life through virtuality glasses?

AUI reported in the October 1995 issue that Escom had taken the European distribution of i-Glasses, a virtual reality headset. Lo and behold at the meeting at which Amiga Technologies sought to reassure the UK Amiga developers that Escom really intended to support the Amiga, the i-Glasses appeared and were, to the bemusement of the gathered developers, lauded as taking an important role, almost with equal status to the Amiga, in the products that Amiga Technologies were going to sell.

Some developers did not conceal their surprise, and even alarm, that the company wasn't concentrating on the Amiga, but letting itself be diverted into another and by no means easier sales area.

Now Silica, who are the major distributor for Amiga Technologies, have taken the VR headset and are pushing it as a way into the growing world of virtuality.

Silica say connect the new i-Glasses headset to a computer or games console and you can watch full colour 3D video images leap around in the space before your eyes. Try it for yourself and see if you agree that the "incredible illusion is reinforced by immersive 3D stereo sound effects and music"!

The i-Glasses can be used with existing games. Two versions are on offer, the PC version costs £899.00, yes, that's not a misprint, and takes VGA and sound signals from a standard PC. It includes headtracking capabilities that follow head movement. This allows the user to look in any direction within a game.

The headset works with all existing PC games and VideoCDs, or with a new generation of specially designed games and movie titles.

The Amiga (composite/TV) headset also works with most popular games consoles and costs £599.00. (Buy an Amiga, or nearly, with the saving from not buying the PC version!) The headset takes any PAL composite video source, including video tape and disc, to produce a virtual 80" colour display. An Upgrade Set is available to give the composite version of the i-Glasses all the powers of the PC version including headtracking.

One of the interesting aspects of this whole affair is that Silica Systems is the retail end of SDL whose parent company has had such a bad time since the fall of Commodore that they have hit the financial rocks and are now in Administration.

Administration of the parent company means that Silica are still trading virtually, if one may use the phrase, normally and are perfectly reliable to do business with. However, they have put up a kind of wall around themselves to protect themselves against their creditors jumping all over them.

Administration is similar to the Chapter 11 procedure in the USA which, ironically, is exactly what Commodore used to keep themselves going until they could sell themselves off.

That sell off appears to have come too late for SDL as they say that something like 50% of their business was Amiga-based and, over those dreadful 18 months, just disappeared. Apparently they couldn't replace it with PCs.

So now they are attempting a restructuring and are able to carry on; with the possibility that they will be sold off. Strangely, in view of their announcement about selling the i-Glasses virtual reality headset, they are a kind of virtual company themselves now. Do all of their staff go around with i-Glasses on? We don't know, but what we really hope is that as the leading distributor for the Amiga, Silica/SDL will stay real and enable the machine to be sold in numbers that will make it a power again. And not a virtual power either.

Contact: Silica Systems, Silica House, Hatherley Road, Sidcup, Kent DA14 4DX. Tel. 0181 309 1111.

Quotes of the Month

"The UK market is a really tough one, still dominated by games. Arts and cultural titles have not taken off as we expected", said Patrick Melchior, Emme's French CD ROM Publisher. "We're hoping it's not a dead investment."

A dead investment in arts and culture in the UK? Ooh, la, la! Monsieur Melchior, whatever would give you that impression? While France, at least under President Mitterrand, provided money for things like that, the UK creates a Lottery so that it can reduce public spending on such unimportant matters.

In the UK, we are much more polite than Hermann Goering, the Nazi Field Marshal who said "When I hear the word "culture" I reach for my revolver." But the attitude of many, especially present Government politicians, is not too dissimilar.

Technologies which may seem wondrous at the time of their invention, fade as they are inevitably overtaken. It is by their cultures and their arts that civilizations have been remembered.

And the problem for anyone who respects the Amiga in the UK is the sheer weight that has always been put behind it as a games machine - a toy. The same may apply to the attitudes of the CD-ROM market.

You may come, Mr. Melchior, like your namesake, bearing gifts, but in this country don't try frankincense or myrrh - or arts and culture - they'll tell you to take it back and bring a toy for the baby instead.

Worm Turns Up Trumps

Team 17 are overjoyed at the response they have had to their new WWW site. They told ***AUI*** that accesses to their Web site has reached well over 20,000 hits a week. The firm put up the shareware version of their game "Worms" on the Internet and on GamesMaster's. GamesNet pages. The full version is due for release on Amiga.

Contact: Team 17 Tel. 01924 267776.

Virginally On-Line

Virgin have reported orders of over £40K of music, games and video from all over the world after joining the UK Shopping Centre on CompuServe recently. The Megastore Net shop now has a range of over 1,500 different items available through ordering direct to Virgin via the Internet.

This form of selling is going to grow rapidly. For, even if the numbers of new Netters doesn't reach the millions predicted, those who use the Net appear to be already a good potential market, especially for technology-oriented products.

The Net Speaks in Tongues

Globalink, a US translation software specialist, have launched onto the Net. The new Internet translation service will be integrated with Netscape Navigator 2.0 and will allow Internet users to translate foreign text while on-line. President of the firm, Jim Lewis, forecasts the translation option will be as common as the spellchecker enjoying worldwide use. Globalink have established European headquarters at Bracknell as a base for marketing in the UK, France, and Germany.

Brand X?

A dagency, DMB&B have been carrying out research into popular brands of PCs and have come up with the surprising fact that a third of consumers in the survey were unable to name even one company. Of those in the know, IBM was perceived as the industry leader, followed by Amstrad and Apple. (Amstrad? where have these consumers been living?)

DMB&B concluded that the other companies needed to step up their image and market their competitive benefits positively. What a surprise. Perhaps they could advertise through DMB&B.

The chips are up

Motorola, the US electronics group who manufacture the chips for the Amiga, is, it says, responding to the increase in demand for credit card devices by stepping up its manufacturing capacity for smartcard microcontroller chips.

Motorola, who already dominate the market with a 70% share, will now increase production tenfold to ten million chips per week with an investment of £2.5 billion. Motorola claims that the annual global market for microchips will grow from under $100 million - £65 million now - to over $1 billion, £650 milion by the end of the century.

Scotland has been chosen as the company's worldwide headquarters for smartcards and will have a key role for the new development.

Quotes of the Month

"The Playstation happened to be the right machine at the right time, with the right price, the right company backing it, and the right number of zeros in the marketing budget". Steve Jarratt, Editor of the Official Playstation Magazine, who is, of course, completely unbiased.

"Right" everything? That claim is made because they sold 30,000 or so into the retail trade in the first few days. But though Mr. Jarratt's statement comes from a not unprejudiced source, that doesn't make it wrong. All those "rights" may well be correct, for compare the picture with what CBM or Escom have done with the Amiga in recent times. "Right" etc.? Too little and too late, might well be a more accurate description.

There are those who think that the Playstation is just a passing phase and will last less time than the Amiga has. We shall see.

Synthetic light

Researchers from Princeton University in America have recently demonstrated what could be the replacement for the LCD screen used in today's laptop. The material employed is a special plastic that emits light of varying colours when an electric current is applied to it. The device can apparently produce the three colours - red, green, and blue - necessary for a full-colour display, plus yellow and violet.

EU thought it was all over?

Already subject to a 3.9% tariff, CD-ROM drives are expected to suffer a further 10% rise in cost when the European Union re-categorises them from computer peripheral to electronic consumer goods. Why? Well they can play audio CDs, can't they?

They also have plans to build a Euro-community wide power grid, which means that a power station in Scotland will be able to supply consumers in Greece etc. This might upset those that are about to get their hands on the privatised National Grid, or whatever it's called nowadays, but the main fear for the Eurosceptics, which really means Eurohaters, is the introduction of Euro-voltage and power sockets. Goodbye safe, square, three pin and 240v. Hello, dodgy two pins and 220v.

Blockbusting into Asia

Blockbuster Entertainment, the kings of the video rental business, are proposing to move into the booming Asian countries and open 1000 stores by the year 2000 in direct competition with Hong Kong's KPS retail video stores.

In addition, the US firm plans to have eight new music stores up and running by the end of the year. Blockbuster have 4000 stores operating in the US and hundreds of outlets in Australia, Europe, and Japan, but this will be their first attempt in Asia.

Acclaim Claims Duo

Acclaim has bought up two of the largest independent entertainment software studios - Probe Entertainment and Sculptured Software, beating Electronic Arts who, it seems, also wanted to acquire them.

Acclaim's US share price jumped by 15% at the time of the acquisition, followed by another 2.5% on the following day. Shares ended the day at around $25.

Acclaim says Fergus McGovern's Probe's "successes" include Primal Rage for Time Warner Interactive, and Batman Forever for Acclaim. Sculptured Software is famous (?) for Mortal Kombat and Mortal Kombat II.

Both Probe Entertainment and Sculptured Software will retain their identities within the Acclaim empire, which now has exclusive use of the two firms' 250 staff. Acclaim has made most of its presently increasing profits in the cartridge boom of the early nineties. It has acquired these development companies possibly because it realises that massed experience in programming and development isn't so easy to find. In fact, though, none of the games mentioned above was particularly original, they were unquestionably very profitable, but how much did they add to the creative scope of games?

Beat 'em ups, even mediocre ones, are an ever popular video game form. Armies of programmers are what the Japanese games producers use to churn out the stuff that fills the arcades. Looks like Acclaim is setting itself up to produce larger quantities of the same kind of profitable dross.

Hot under the cover

The next generation Pentium chip, previously known as the P6, which some wags were hoping to be called Sexium, has now been officially launched and named by Intel as "Pentium Pro". Rival microprocessor manufacturer NexGen have quickly announced their 'better than Pro' competitor - the Nx686. However Intel have put pressure on clone manufacturers to design-in the capacity for heat dissipation of up to a staggering 40W - that's three times more than the current Pentium designs produce, and remember the problems they had with that little hot one.

At the launch of the Pentium Pro, attended by companies such as IBM, Hewlett Packard, et al, who have already produced prototype machines with the new chip, Compaq put something of a damper on the joyous proceedings by announcing that the chip had a problem when their computers containing it were linked into a network. Because of this, they said they wouldn't be releasing any machines with Pentium Pro until well into 1996.

The Pentium Pro is claimed by Intel to run at a little matter of 200MHz, now that's fast and PCs with the new chip on board are thought to be going to be priced at around $4000, some £2700. And Escom want to sell A4000s at £1800? Someone must be joking.

Meanwhile Advanced Micro Devices (AMD), who still haven't got their rival Pentium class chip, the K5, to market yet in viable numbers are to buy NexGen in an $840 million deal. Once complete AMD plan to sell the Nx686 as their own K6, so securing their position as the second biggest chip supplier to the PC market.

Another third-party chip manufacturer, Cyrix, is struggling as sales of 486 processors plummet. Their 5x86 sold in reasonable quantities, but not enough to stop their business from falling dramatically. Yet Intel go from strength to strength, reaching a record turnover of $16 billion - about £10 billion - this year.

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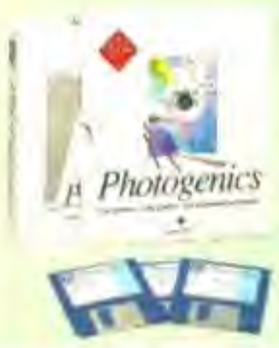

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OverDrive Double Speed £179.00
Allows access to Amiga specific CDs and play CD[32] software - HAR 3540

OverDrive Quad Speed £249.00
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SEE FEATURE ON PAGE 7

OverDrive IDE HD 560Mb £249.00
Ultra Fast 560Mb Hard Disk plugs into PCMCIA slot - HAR 3544

OverDrive IDE HD 1.2Gb £349.00
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Zoom 14.4XE Fax Modem £116.33
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2730 **3** 06/10

Quotes of the Month

"To go from Bosnia to One Foot in the Grave, to be treated as having a two minute attention span, to be assumed to need more and more stimulation by increasingly startling presentations is to have everything reduced to the same level of significance or insignificance," said the former Archbishop of York.

He went on "To have almost limitless power to call up any image, to convey and receive information without any restraints, to create, as it were, one's own world, could reinforce the dangerous perception that life has no purpose beyond self gratification."

The Archbishop's first comment has a very incisive edge. He is right in saying we are giving ourselves an immense problem with reality itself if we place, in the powerfully convincing medium of television, so close together that they are on he same plane of consciousness and believability, ugly, sometimes terrible events juxtaposed with frivolity and escapism.

TV does reduce vastly differing occurrences to the same level of significance. They appear on the same screen in the same time frame, often with the same production values. What happens to our ability to judge the significance of real tragedy when it is placed with, even interrupted by, sales messages and surrounded by entertainment?

In the whole of human history, our race has not been faced with a brainwashing medium so powerful as TV. Worryingly not only is it so believable a medium, but it also fits diversion and enjoyment into the same format as terror and death, daily. Is it surprising that the USA, for example, is such a violence soaked society when the age groups that are least equipped to distinguish reality from fantasy, children and adolescents, are provided with a diet of undifferentiated TV in which the real violence and horror of Viet Nam and Bosnia are easily confused with the fictional baddies of NYPD and the Silence of the Lambs?

Seemingly children in the USA see several thousand killings on TV before they reach school leaving age. And they are supposed to be able to separate factual deaths from fictional ones...

As for the Archbishop's second point about creating one's own world. Perhaps in a world as ours, in which such confusion and ugliness seem the order of the day, it unsurprising that many take refuge in another world of their own making.

But doesn't his comment suggest that he fears that such power not only reduces the distance in capability between the human being and the traditional, world-creating God, in which the Archbishop believes, but also that religion, at least in the West, can't offer a sense that there is any reason for living other than hedonistically to "enjoy" life.

The ability of technology to enable the creation of "self-gratifying" worlds is not a crime of technology, but a result of a society in which commercialised values have enforced a confusion of what is of significance and what is for gratification, what is real and what is unreal.

Don't blame the engine, Archbishop, blame the greed and stupidity of the society that creates it, and of the people who drive it.

And, as doubtless the Archbishop used to say on Sunday mornings, so endeth the lesson.

Amiga Club International

Where have all the Amiga users gone? According to the Amiga Club, most of their members are now abroad which has prompted Roy Byrne to change the name of the club he runs to "Amiga Club International". (Now there's something familiar about that name, don't you think?)

The Amiga Club has been in existence for six years, supplying members with a disk of the month and the chance to purchase PD/Shareware for 40p if they supply the disks. Amiga Club International is a member of The Amiga International User Groups Association.

The cost of membership is £10 for the first year with subsequent years at £5. Curiously no price is mentioned for overseas members, for whom the club has changed their name, although they say that anyone joining the club in response to this ***AUI*** news item may join for £7 if they send in a photocopy of this article.

Contact: Amiga Club International, 190 Falloden Way, Hampstead Garden Suburb, London NW11 6JE Tel. 0181 455 1626.

Clubbing it in Greece

The Amiga Club International may be interested to know it has a rival which has just been set up in Greece. Called creatively "Greek Amiga Club", it is the first Amiga computer club to be officially recognized "by the law in the country of Greece" according to Stephanos Siopoulos, the club's Secretary General.

The club is committed to supporting both users and distributors to promote the Amiga in "several professional applications fields". They are appealing for donations to the club, on behalf of the individual users, from foreign user associations, hardware and, especially, software developers. They are willing to help developers translate their software into Greek to overcome problems caused by the Greek alphabet, as finding and purchasing original Amiga software in Greece is, they say, rather difficult.

Contact: Stephanos Siopoulos, 52 Silivrias Str., N. Smyrni 171 23, Athens, Greece. Tel. 0030 19349963. E-mail. konem@prometheus.hol.gr (attn: Greek Amiga Club) or anaconda@athena.compulink.gr (attn. Greek Amiga Club).

Just the Trick

Canadian company AmiTrix have announced a hardware and software networking solution for all Amigas. The AmiLink hardware enables the networking of up to 20 Amigas via their floppy ports. This leaves the other ports free, and allows for high speed data transmission. Plus up to three external floppy drives can still be connected per machine.

Apart from the software that supports AmiLink, AmiTrix have also negotiated the rights to bundle Envoy - the official Amiga networking software - with their kits. The starter outfit consists of two network modules, AmigaLink and Envoy, cables and connectors.

The price for this lot is currently set at $299, some £200. Additional units vary between $135 and $179 depending on which software is supplied.

Contact: AmiTrix Development, 5312 - 47 Street, Beaumont, Alberta T4X 1H9, Canada. Tel/Fax. 001 403 929 8459. Email. sales@amitrix.com

HP Targets Desktop Market

Hewlett-Packard has announced its first line of disk drives designed specifically for the desktop computer market. Available in 1Gb and 1.6Gb capacities with industry-standard Enhanced IDE interfaces, the new products feature HP "SureStore out-of-box compatibility with all popular operating systems." Oh, really?

The HP SureStore Disk 1080A (1Gb) and HP SureStore Disk 1600A (1.6Gb) are backed by HP's "SureStore brand benefits, such as Express Exchange" which, they say, assures drive replacement within 24 hours to users. HP also offers direct, end user phone access to trained HP technicians.

The new E-IDE hard drives extend HP's existing line of 1Gb, 2Gb and 4Gb SCSI interface drives that target servers, workstations and high-end desktop PCs. HP expects the 1Gb and 1.6Gb models to be popular in situations where VARs (Value Added Resellers) are specifying or configuring desktop systems and PC upgrades.

Contact: Hewlett-Packard Ltd., Cain Road, Bracknell, Berkshire RG12 1HN. Tel. 01344 369222

Compaq Top for Servers

According to IDC research, Compaq now has 41% of the PC server market largely because they are running Windows NT, offering twice the performance of Unix systems. The most popular machine being a Compaq Proliant 4500 with four 133MHz Pentium processors, each with two megabytes of Level 2 cache RAM.Compaq is now working on clustering technology to allow NT servers to be linked to do minicomputer and mainframe-size tasks.

Net Increase

According to the New York Times, adults are spending as much time surfing the Net each week as they are watching rented videos. The first survey of the Information Highway has shown that 10.8 per cent of the population have used the Net, which is more than anticipated by many 'experts'. However the survey also showed that the majority of users tap into the Net from the office rather than from home, although presumably the same can't be said for videos!

But what it also means is that users aren't having to pay for the phone bills resulting from their going onto the Net. It's always cheaper and a very attractive option when someone else is paying.

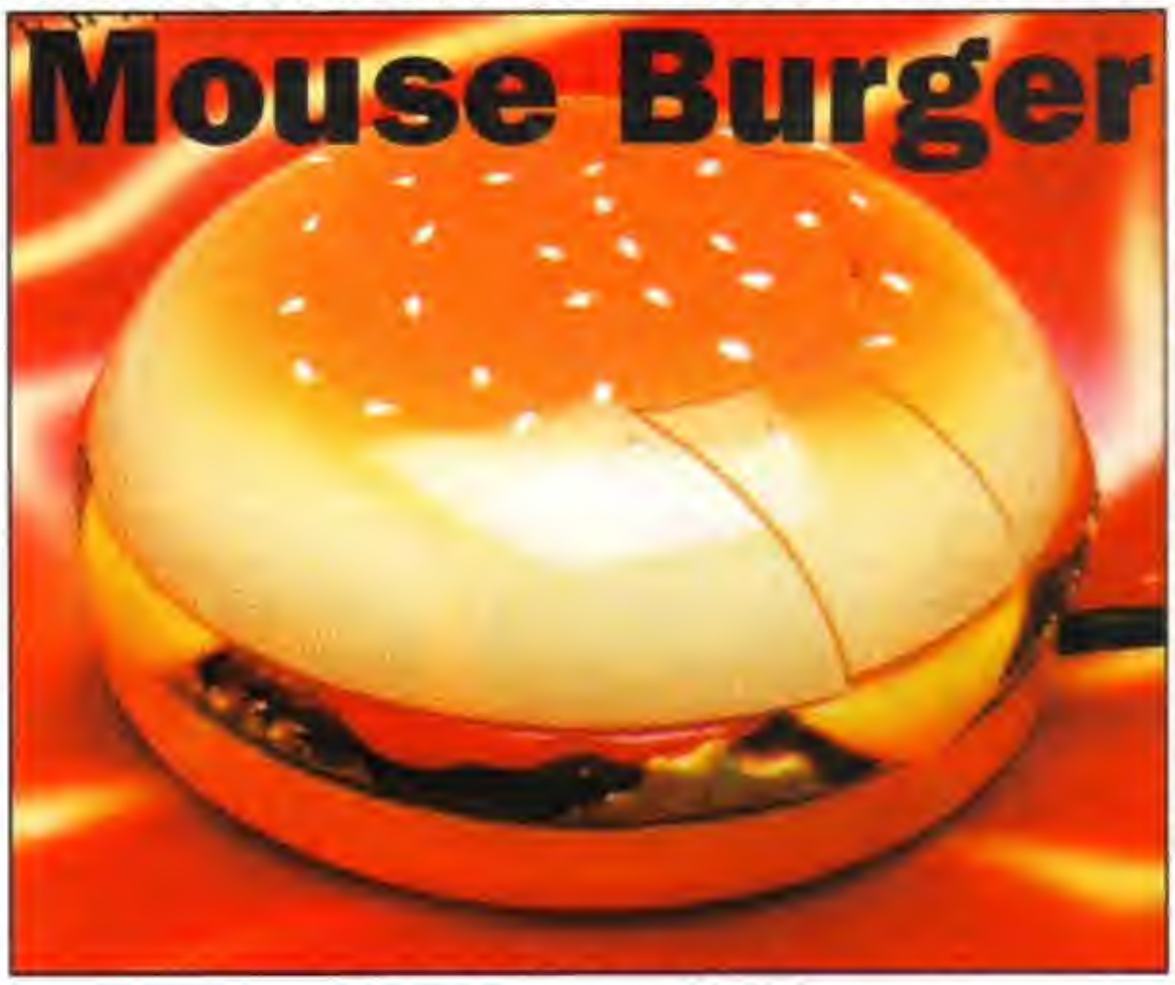
Bum Draw

A computer user in Pennsylvania is having a go at suing Corel for megamillions. Why? Because versions 4 and 5 of Corel Draw "were not properly tested, were released in defective condition, were unmerchantable and unable to pass as suitable in the trade, and failed to properly load or execute". Nothing serious then!

Nothing new there then, so why should the poor old Corel user be surprised? Most software comes out in that problematic state. You can't really imagine, say car or washing machine manufacturers letting their products out in that state; or Marks and Spencers selling bras or knickers that fall to pieces when touched - though that might not be such an unpleasant idea.

Is it that people - and especially software companies - do not actually believe that computing is a part of the real world where such things have the same standards?

Mouse Burger



You can't eat or even wear this Big Mac.

Sunnyline is serving up the Mouse Burger, a mouse shaped like a cheeseburger. The Mouse Burger costs £27 and comes with its own driver, which has double click shortcuts and adjustable cursor speed. The product's launch comes along with those other can't-live-without computing accessories; the Lion King mouse mat, and the Trojan Light Pen.

The Trojan Light Pen? That used to one of the less demanded add-ons for the C64 back in the mid-Eighties! What is this - Back to the Future with the Mouseburger and Company?

Multimedia Monitor

ViewSonic have launched a multimedia monitor with built in hi-fi stereo speakers. The 17GA is the first to feature the Viewsonic's new "PerfectSound" system and has been designed they say, to make the most of multimedia applications at the office, in education or for entertainment.

The new monitor has twin dome speakers, "with microhole speaker grills, built into the bezels at each side of side of the screen". This, claim ViewSonic, "unsurpassed stereo sound quality."

There is a built-in microphone, external microphone port, and headphone jack. The 17GA is backed by ViewSonic's three year warranty.

Contact: Viewsonic, Airport House, Purley Way, Croydon, CR0 0XZ Tel. 0181 781 1856.

Quotes of the Month

"We have hundreds of employees who get up every morning with just one thing on their minds: finding ways to improve the Internet, thereby winning for Microsoft a larger share of the market for Internet browsers. People ask, 'Will the Internet be the thing that kills you?' I say with tongue in cheek, 'No. It's all the other things that will kill us, because we're so distracted by the Internet'.

Bill Gates (who else!) Boss of Microsoft.

It is, of course, Microsoft that is being said to be the big loser if PCs are replaced by cheap set top boxes that don't need its Windows software. No wonder hundreds of employees have the Internet on their minds. Their jobs may depend on Microsoft coming up with something that eliminates the threat the Internet poses Bill Gates' company.

Windows on the Shelf

The hype surrounding the release of Windows 95 meant that 7 million copies sold, covering the launch costs and helping to raise profits for Microsoft by 58% to $499m - £300 million - for the quarter. However it seems that the majority of copies of Win95 that were sold went to PC manufacturers and were pre-installed on PCs. 'Only' 3 million stand alone copies sold ...

Astrion Carries the Torch

Astrion, distributors of CD-ROM products in the UK for The Discovery Channel and Voyager, are now developing products themselves. The Olympic Games, priced £39.99, is what they claim to be the first official licenced history of the Olympic Games to be produced on CD-ROM. Sports and history fans can access 100 years of the Olympic Games information from Athens 1896 to Barcelona in 1992. "As well as audio-visual footage of the most memorable moments, there will be statistical records and biographies of medal winners." AV footage from 1896? That must be very early prizewinning stuff indeed!

Contact: Astrion Plc., 142 Great North Way, Hendon, London NW4 1EG Tel. 0181 202 0011

HP Gobbles Up Convex

With debts mounting up over the last two years, Convex Computer has been acquired by HP in a takeover worth £100 million. Convex uses Hewlett Packard technology in their super-computers for scientific and engineering applications, like oil exploration, automotive crash simulation, and weather modelling. HP currently holds a 5% equity stake in Convex.

Convex will become a wholly-owned subsidiary of HP and will be integrated into HP's computer systems group to become the high-end of the company's computer product line.

Sun Shine

A survey of over 1,100 children has revealed that The Sun newspaper is more popular with seven to fifteen year old boys than any other publication, including sport, comics, and computer games magazines.

The 1995 Business Development Partnership's Schools Survey also throws into dispute the popular theory that children are turning away from television to computer generated entertainment, with an average of 41% of girls and 34% of boys watching 3 - 4 hours of television each weekday.

With all that TV and The Sun to read, do they have time to play games? Well, The Sun readers do, you'd have to be illiterate to take more than six minutes to read the whole ten-words-a-sentence daily comic.

Eat Your Heart Out

A US Government report has shown that the Food and Drug Administration has spent more than $13 million on a flawed computer program that could allow tainted foods and medicines into the US.

The program was supposed to modernise the agency's outdated system of randomly inspecting more than $10 billion worth of imported food and medical supplies every year. The job was previously carried out by hand and for the time being will revert to that tried and tested method.

Sorry. We don't know if you should eat that, the computers down.

Bikini Net

According to some US experts, "Women watchers are very well served on the Net with choices ranging from the Baywatch Web Site to the 75th Miss America with its 50 contestants." For a varied diet though they are advised to try Hooters, 'home of the world famous bikini clad waitresses' which started with one branch 11 years ago and now has 150.

Now could it be that they don't mean "women watchers" but watchers of women, who are more likely to turn out to be men? Funny language, English.

Alcatel's satellite deal

Alcatel Alsthom, the French telecoms, transport and engineering group has been awarded a contract for about £400 million to construct three satellites which will be used to create a digital radio network for the Third World.

Work will shortly begin for World Space, a privately owned US-based company which aims to be the first large-scale provider of digital radio services by satellite.

The system is expected to be a cost effective replacement for many broadcasters in the developing world which have difficulties reaching even their own national population using shortwave and FM transmissions.

The BBC is also experimenting with digital radio broadcasts which produce a higher quality sound.

The Net on the Ocean Wave

Swedish Skipper, Dennis Oren, set out from Falmouth on 22nd October to undertake a single handed, non-stop, voyage round the world in an 86 year old wooden Baltic Trader called the Vega of Bergkvara.

The boat is being sponsored by the Swedish Children's charity Globetree Foundation in support of the UN's 50th birthday. Globetree organised the financing of the project as part of their Blue Wave initiative. The Blue Wave project aims to engage children in practical, environmental studies across the world.

A consortium of high technology companies comprising Digital, Sony, Upnet and Swedish Inmarsat provider, Telia Mobitel, have banded together to install a state of the art communications system designed to link to the Internet. The consortium has implemented a system linked via the Inmarsat satellite to enable children to follow the voyage round the world and to provide a worldwide forum for children to work together using electronic mail and the World Wide Web.

On board the Vega there is a HiNote Ultra, a lightweight laptop PC from Digital with specialised peripherals to enable the multimedia capabilities, cameras, and microphones positioned by Sony. These are linked via a Cisco router to the Inmarsat Satellite system, which supplies the information to the Web site on a Digital Alpha Internet Server 1000, connected to Taide, the Upnet Internet service provider, based in Stockholm. The Web site is accessible worldwide.

"To our knowledge, this is the first time that a real-time Internet link has been created on a sailing boat. Information collected by the Vega will automatically be updated on the Web site. The Internet is a mass communications medium designed for everyone and offers endless possibilities for people at sea for periods of time", said Peter Szmulik, Internet Business manager for Digital Equipment in Northern Europe.

The system's multimedia capabilities allow yachtsmen to send not just text and graphics, but also real-time sound clips and pictures. For example, documents could be edited and sent to the office, or pictures and sound clips from on deck sent to the family at home.

The cost of installing a basic multimedia Internet system on a boat typically starts at around £5,000.

To follow the electronic log of the Vega's progress, contact Internet address: http://wwis.upnet.se/bluewave.

Amstrad back in the black

Ex-retail giant Amstrad, is back in the black, unveiling a £3.06m profit after three years of losses. Profit contributions from PC computer manufacturer Viglen, acquired last year, helped offset continuing losses in traditional consumer electronics.

And not too long ago, Spurs Chairman and Amstrad Boss Alan Sugar, was trying to persuade the company's shareholders that they had no chance of making any money out of the company. So the best thing they could do was sell their shares back to him, at a very reasonable price, for him, of course. Oh yes, and that was to have included the little matter of £100 million or so cash that was in the Amstrad kitty. Oddly, the shareholders didn't accept the offer. And now, surprise, surprise, Amstrad's making profits again. It just shows how even businessmen as brilliant as Alan Sugar can get it wrong. Or do we mean get it right?

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- Pistol-Grip handle
- Three fire buttons
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- Autofire facility

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Logic 3

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- Designed to be mounted on a computer monitor
- For any computer with audio output or PC music/voice card, like Sound Blaster, Ad Lib, Covox . . .
- Built-in booster circuitry and magnetic shielding
- Also accepts output from a Walkman, Discman, CD player etc.

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LOGIC 3

FW 111 – Digital Freewheel for Amiga/ST/C64 etc.
FW 123 – Analog Freewheel for Amiga

Can you imagine Nigel Mansell using a joystick to control his car around a high-speed track? Probably not. That's why we came up with the Freewheel. Just plug it into your computer joystick port and experience the real sensation of driving!

- Suitable for all types of driving and flying games
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- Extra-long connector cable.
- Does not need to be mounted or fixed to a surface

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Towering High

Keeps them private and confidential.

Fellowes has been considering the needs of CD-ROM users and storage. They have produced a CD Tower as a practical solution for the storage and protection of up to 20 CD-ROMs, CDs, and CD Caddies.

The dove grey Tower has been designed to suit any office or home and to organise and store the disks behind the lightly tinted transparent lockable door for protection. This, they claim, will ensure privacy and confidentiality. The Tower can be wall mounted or free standing.

To support the launch of the new Tower, Fellowes is offering a free CD Jewel Case with every product sold "up to March 31st 1995", subject to availability. ***AUI*** assumes this is not a catch, and that they mean 1996!

Contact: Fellowes Ltd, Doncaster Road, Kirk Sandall, Doncaster, South Yorkshire, DN3 1HT Tel. 01302 885331.

Companies get together

Gold Disk has teamed up with Fujitsu ICL in a worldwide deal to bundle its multimedia presentation software, Astound for Windows, with the hardware manufacturer's ErgoPro PCs and ErgoLite notebooks.

Now why should that be of interest to Amiga users? Because the name Gold Disk might just be a shade familiar to readers of ***AUI***. Were Gold Disk not the famed creators of many wondrous Amiga programs including none other than the one and only Professional Page?

Once Canadian, but now California-based, Gold Disk have taken their glittering talents away from the Amiga completely and are committed exclusively to The PC. No use shouting Shame! Though we might all feel that way. If Escom genuinely want to make a success of the Amiga what they should be doing is getting companies like Gold Disk back into the Amiga market. How? Simply by paying them to produce outstanding software for our beloved machine. The downfall of the Amiga, particularly as a serious machine began when Commodore didn't ante up to get the top developers to put out their software on the Amiga. That short-sighted policy condemned the Amiga to be marginalised from the mainstream where the developers naturally tended to go. just like the late, lamented Gold Disk.

It could be you?

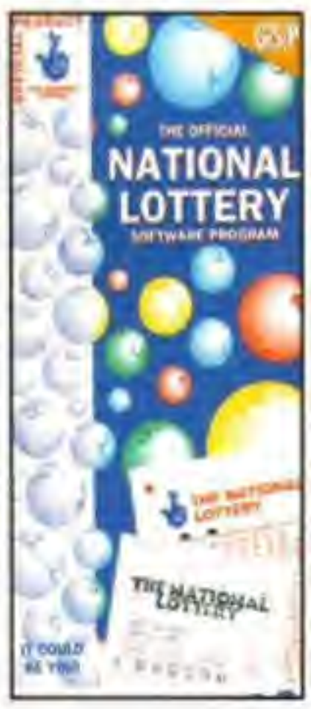
Have any of your numbers come up yet? It could be you who decides that a little help is needed to win the Lottery. The choice, it seems, is yours. If birthdays and house numbers haven't brought you any luck should you invest in one of those dinky keyrings sold at petrol stations or a computer program specifically designed to help you choose those lucky numbers?

On the ***AUI*** cover disks we have included Lottery programs to help you choose those multimillion pound numbers. And - see the Write to Reply this month - it has helped some readers to win cash.

But there are commercial programs that claim to help Lottery hopers to trouser millions. Can they do it? Ah, that's for you to decide if you think the Big Finger is pointing your way.

There is a program is available in traditional 5 1/4" format price £12.99, or there is a version on CD-ROM priced £14.99.

Contact: Gem 01279 822822.



SLIGHTLY LESS SAFE THAN JOINING THE MILE HIGH CLUB BAREBACK WITH A JUNKIE WHORE IN A PLANE FLYING OVER A WAR ZONE WITH THREE ENGINES ON FIRE A PISSED UP PILOT AND CARLOS THE JACKAL SITTING RIGHT BEHIND YOU.

Oh really?

Advertisements for computer games are getting more and more desperate in their tone. Recently Virgin had to cover up a picture of France's President Chirac when he was included in a rogues gallery of dictators and other, similar, admirable characters in an ad for one of their games.

Posters for the game had to have a quick visit from the paper and paste merchants and a big white space appeared where Chirac's face had been as a result of protests from the French, and others, who didn't think he was quite up to Hitler level.It was pointed out, by Virgin in their defence, that Chirac has been somewhat negligent of world opinion in nuking innocent Pacific atolls and their piscatorial inhabitants.

However, the language in the Mortal Kombat ad illustrated here doesn't seem in all that good taste either. Why does selling games, exploiting children, or those who act like children, seem to bring out the worst in people?

Quotes *of the Month*

"When we created Doom we liked it. We knew it would pay the bills. But if you'd told me I'd be sitting here two years later talking about merchandising and bidding wars, I'd have asked you what you's been drinking".
Jay Wilbur, CEO ID Software.

Doom has sold 200,000 units and is installed as shareware on an estimated 15 million PCs. The Mac version, and Ultimate Doom, have now both become chart toppers. Yes, you can make an awful lot of money if you remember that famous phrase "You'll never go broke underestimating the level of taste of the average consumer, especially the computer games player."

It is a famous phrase, isn't it? If it isn't, perhaps it should be.

"99% of the information clogging up cyberspace is drivel."
Nicholas Blincoe, Computer Retail News

Mr. Blincoe has a point. As yet the amount of information on the Superinformation highway certainly has no purpose other than to enlarge the ego of those who put it on and/or waste the time of those who receive it.

But isn't that also true, if not in quite so dramatic proportions of the information to be found today in other media such as newspapers? It is said that in the western world, 60% or more of the population gets its information on current affairs from the TV.

So newspapers have become more likely to create "features" and "columns" than report news and many if not most of these features and columns could well be classed as "drivel" too.

Printers

Star LC240 24-pin mono	£135.00
Star SJ144 thermal	£269.00
Citizen ABS 24pin col	£155.00
Cannon BJ30	£199.99
HP Deskjet 600	£289.99
Cannon BJ4000C	£329.00

Eklipse Mouse

290 DPI
Microswitched buttons
ST/Amiga switchable
Free mouse mat
£7.99

Fusion Genlock

Phone for details
£94.99

AMIGA PACKS

Amiga 1200 Magic Pack £399.99

Amiga 1200 Computer Combat Pack £349.99

Repair Services

Our service department can repair Amigas in minimum time at competetive rates. All repiars go through our quotation service. We then report an exact cost for repair. Turn around is usually 4-5 working days but we can arrange same day service (subject to fault)

Quotation	**£15**
Min Repair Charge	**£32.25**
Courier Pickup	**£11**
Courier Return	**£7**
Same Day Service	**£15**

Memory Upgrades

A500 512K
(Upgrades A500 to 1Mb RAM)
£12.99

A500+ 1Mb
(Upgrades A500+ to 2Mb RAM)
£16.99

A600 1Mb
(Upgrades A600 to 2Mb RAM)
£24.99

A1200 4Mb
(Upgrades A1200 to 6Mb RAM)
£179.99

A1200 8Mb
(Upgrades A1200 to 10Mb RAM)
£299.99

2x 1MB SIMM's
Upgrades GVP HD8 +II Hard Drive to 2Mb RAM.
£44.99

4x 1MB SIMM's
Upgrades GVP HD8 +II Hard Drive to 4Mb RAM.
£89.98

2x 4MB SIMM's
Upgrades GVP HD8 +II Hard Drive to 8Mb RAM.
£279.99

Ladbroke Compting International are one of the longest established home computer dealers in the U.K. We have an extensive customer service policy which involves testting of all hardware proir to despatch to ensure that the goods arrive in working order. Offering free advice and support over the phone and keeping customers informed. Although our prices are not always the cheapest we do endeavour to offer consistently good service and backup.

All prices/specifications are correct at copy date 09/11/95 (whilst stock lasts), and are subject to change without proir notice.

Ladbroke Computing

33 Ormskirk Road, Preston,
Lancashire PR1 2QP
TEL 01772 203166 / FAX 01772 561071

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You can order by mail, Cheque/Postal orders made payable to Ladroke Computing. Or give your credit card details to one of our telesales staff.

Delivery

Postal Delivery is available on orders less than £40 (Normally £3 phone for details). For orders above the value of £40 add £7 for insured courier delivery. Saturday Delivery £20. All the above price are for mainland U.K.

All prices include VAT

Hard Drives

All Datapulse hard drives comes as complete boxed external units with a small footprint, 2 SCSI ports, internal power supply. compatible add on units for GVP HD8 + II or A600/A1200 via Squirel Interface.

Datapulse Micra
532Mb £230.00

Datapulse Mica
1Gb £470.00

Squirel SCSI Interface
A600/1200 £64.99

SCSI I Cable £14.99
Allows connection to VGP HD8 + II for A500(+)

Floppy Disk Drives

Amitek External Drive	**£55.00**
A500 Internal Drive	**£39.00**
A600/1200 Internal	**£49.00**

SCSI CD ROMS

Sony external CDROM with internal power supply and audio outputs.

Quad Speed SCSI CDROM £260

Squirel SCSI Interface A600/1200 £64.99

SCSI I Cable £14.99
Allows connection to GVP HD8 + II for A500(+)

Amplified Speakers

Soundwave 10
(80 Watts) ***£39.99***

Soundwave 20
(25 Watts) ***£25.85***

Soundwave 240
(120 Watts) ***£49.99***

Monitor's

Amiga M1438S Multisync £299.99
14", 0.28 dot pitch ultisync monitor with built in speakers. compatible with A500/600/1200.

OEM 17" SVGA Monitor £454.73
.28 dot pitch. Non-Interlaced, MPR2

Fax / Modems

Break into the communications revolution with the Communicator high speed range of modems. Log on to commercial bulletin board services, contact hardware vendors BBS's for online support or surf the Internet.

14,400 Baud External Fax / Modem £99.99
Fully BT Approved, includes all cables and 5 year warranty.

28,800 Baud External Fax / Modem £179.99
Fully BT Approved, includes all cables and 1 year warranty.

Amiga goes PowerPC

The first POWER AMIGA should be available at the beginning 1997 and will feature the Power PC 604 RISC CPU. Further models will be available later in the entry-level, as well as in the mid-range, say Amiga Technologies.

They claim the Power Amigas will be backwards compatible with current models and will also feature a new and more powerful chipset.

"Our pre-emptive multitasking Operating System AmigaOS will be ported to the Power PC platform first. Our goal is to make our OS hardware independent to allow further ports on other platforms", said Petro Tyschtschenko, Chief Operating Officer, Amiga Technologies

He added: "We have a clear business plan: We do things consequently, step by step. First, we ramped up the production and set up an organisation to handle the Amiga market and satisfy the demand. Now that we have achieved this successfully, we focus on research & development to bring new and better products on the market. One of the mistakes the former Commodore made was to do too many things at a time, too many promises and therefore losing focus on important aspects of its business. We have learned from these mistakes and won't repeat them. Commitments and promises are nice but facts are better."

The developments will also focus on including more features in the AmigaOS, especially regarding network abilities and memory management.

The development of the native RISC AmigaOS will be made at Amiga Technologies. An R&D department is currently being set up in Bensheim, Germany, with sufficient engineers to meet the announced schedules. Former well known Commodore technical staff as well as new engineers will probably join the team in Bensheim this year.

This development project will also be involving a dozen companies in close partnership with Amiga Technologies GmbH.

More possible news for all Amiga users: The Power PC technology will not only be available for new Power Amigas. Due to a close co-operation between Amiga Technologies and Phase V, the German turbo board manufacturer, a full range of Power PC boards will also be available for the A1200, A3000 and A4000 Amigas.

This, say AT, will allow a general migration of the Amiga platform towardsPower PC in a short time, also for current models.

The first Power PC boards for current Amigas should be available before end of 1996.

Amiga Technologies say they will be flexible in licensing the RISC Operating System as before so that a global solution will be available for all above mentioned Amiga computers.

The 68060 board for the Amiga 4000 T should be available during the first quarter of 1996 and should provide the power needed by applications like 3D rendering software, compilers and high-end graphics software.

During 1996, new 68000 based entry-level models will be available. These Amigas will be based on the A1200, but, say Amiga Technologies, with faster processors, more memory expansion capacity and CD ROM expansion.

Packard Bell v. Compaq

A bitter dispute between Packard Bell and Compaq is reaching the courts in America. Packard Bell is claiming unfair competition, defamation, and violation - yes that's all. It is making the claim under the Federal Lanham Act which makes false advertising illegal.

Packard Bell accuse Compaq of running a campaign against them and "purposely misleading the public in comparing the practice of the two companies". Allegedly - you can understand why we are being very careful here because we don't want to end up in Court! - Compaq have suggested that Packard Bell has been using "second hand" parts in machines they sell as new. Packard Bell is seeking punitive damages, reimbursement for loss of income, and a court order compelling Compaq to run corrective advertising.

Bored by software!

According to a report by the Nikkei Weekly, Japanese teenagers are favouring traditional boardgames, such as Monopoly, rather than the latest interactive software. Other popular games the youngsters have developed a yen for are 'The Game of Life' and 'The Dealer' which "hold their appeal as they are based on reality rather than fantasy." Oh really?

Then who has been buying the claimed sale of over 1 million Sega Saturns in Japan and who is apparently buying up all the Playstations that Sony can produce for Japan? The Anti-Monopoly Party?

Amiga QDrive

Amiga Technologies have told *AUI* that they are bringing out the Q Drive, a CD-ROM drive for the Amiga 1200 and 600. Plugging in via the PCMCIA port, the multi-session quad speed drive is to be launched at a price of £229 including VAT.

The drive has been designed to play, using specially supplied software, audio CDs, PhotoCDs, and CD32 titles, as well as allowing access to ISO9660 format data discs. The HiFi quality stereo sound from the drive can be mixed in with the Amiga generated sound output, and then fed to a separate speaker system. This arrangement is somewhat similar to that on the old A570 drive that was made for the A500+.

Now you know what it's for

Can it be that there are still some people around who are largely ignorant about the value of everyday PCs? Apparently so as Durham University Business School has published a free booklet 'How on Earth can a Computer Help my Business?'

The guide uses 21 case studies to show how companies negotiated the problems of implementing new systems and then reaped the benefits. For example, one bookshop located in Galway started to advertise on the Internet giving a detailed catalogue of books in stock.

The booklet, however, emphasises that a business needs to sort out its paper based management systems before installing a computer. Or even get its management properly trained.

Contact: Durham University Business School
Tel. 0191 374 3384.

New Amiga Books

After a period of some inactivity Bookmark Publishing, a sister company to Hi-Soft, have obtained the services of Jeff Walker, the editor of Just Amiga Monthly (JAM). He has now become 'editor-in-chief' at Bookmark and will supervise the production of quality Amiga-related books that give practical advice, by some good - though not necessarily well-known - authors.

The first book due out is by ***AUI***'s very own Paul Overaa, and is to be called "Making the most of Midi". Jeff Walker told ***AUI*** that "It would make an ideal Christmas present". JAM will continue to be published, but from the Bookmark address.

Contact:
Bookmark Publishing, The Old School,
Greenfield,
Bedford, MK45 5DE
Tel. 01525 713671

Return to Go

The afore mentioned Japanese teenagers - see "Bored by Software!" item on this page - may be interested to know that they will now be able to test Monopoly with players all over the world, thanks to a CD-ROM with Internet facilities being put out by the world's largest toy company, Hasbro.

Monopoly is 60 years old and is apparently the world's most popular board game. Now up to six players can take part either around one PC or over the Internet or local area network, so a US player could sell Boardwalk to a UK player who would receive the equivalent property, Mayfair, the property we all love. The program also takes care of currency conversion, dollars to pounds etc. (With so many prices needing conversion, perhaps we should get it for these pages too!)

The CD-ROM version features 3D animated counters and a master of ceremonies to roll the dice. Players can view properties before they buy. (What no more little green and red blocks? Shame!)

Aminet 8

Aminet CD 8, dated August 1995, consists of approximately 1,1 gigabytes of software in 3600 archives. Since the release of Aminet CD 7 more than 540 MB new software has appeared. The current edition has a special focus on modules, more than 1000 mods from Aminet were included. User friendly access software makes the Aminet CD 8 a pleasure to use. £14.95

Aminet 9

Coming soon! £14.95

CD-Write

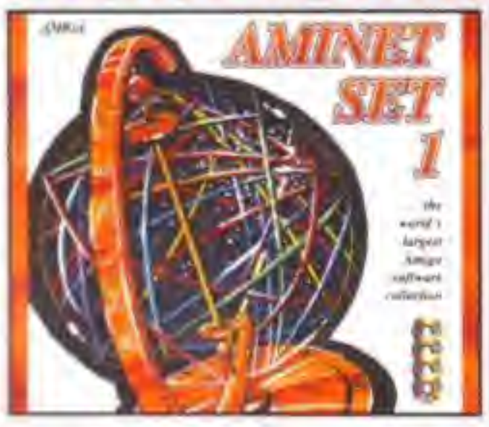
Wha?! You still can't write to your CDs? CD-ROMs have long been an essential part of Amiga computing. Many users already own a CD-ROM drive, and the number of software packages available on CD is increasing steadily. Until now, though, it was not possible to write to CDs. We have solved this problem with our new revolutionary product. Ralph Babel and Stefan Chaowski's Schatztruhe are proud to present what can be considered a marvel of technology. CD-Write enables you to virtually write to CDs with an ordinary CD-ROM drive. From now on, you will be able to write, delete, and modify data on your CDs. This product will take you into a new era, and you will be able to utilize CD-ROM technology in its fullest. £44.95

FreshFish 10

The FreshFish CD-ROM-series, produced directly by Fred Fish, provides Amiga users with hundreds of megabytes of the latest freely redistributable software. Published approximately every two months, each volume is a two CD set containing new submissions since the latest volume, as well as an ever growing selection of tools, libraries, documentation and other useful material that is updated with every

CDBoot 1.0

CDBoot is a fantastic new product that enables you to use almost any CD32 games on an A1200 or A4000 (with AT- or SCSI-CD-ROM drive and any filesystem). You can create a configuration file for each CD, containing information on the Joypad emulation. You can also save the highscore of each CD32 game. The usage and installation of CDBoot is very easy, also for beginners, due to the excellent English manual. Since the compatibility is very high, you can use 98% of CD32 games currently available. CDBoot is an excellent software solution for all Amiga-Freaks, who would like to enter the world of CD32 games! £34.95



Aminet Set 1

Aminet is the world's largest collection of freely distributable Amiga software. Up to 10.000 users access the vast archives every day and countless programmers publish directly via Aminet. Until recently access to Aminet was restricted to international network users. With Aminet Set 1, consisting of 4 CDs, the complete archive is published the first time. This CD-ROM-collection, which is dated January 1995, offers an almost inexhaustible reservoir of top-value Shareware. A wide variety of programs is included: Applications, Games, Demos, Pictures, Mods, Animations, Development-Material, ... It contains approximately 4 gigabytes of software in 12.500 archives and you will enjoy the comfortable user-interface. £29.95

Aminet Set 2

AMINET SET 2, dated November 1995, consists of approximately 4 gigabytes of software in 12.000 archives. Whether you like applications, games, communications or programming, the SET gives you all you need. Easy to use index files and search facilities make accessing it a pleasure. £34.95

Gamers' Delight II

This CD contains 1070 games for the Commodore Amiga from differing categories: Action, Jump & Run, Card Games, Puzzles, Strategy Games - a whole range of computer entertainment awaits! Gamers' Delight will hold you captivated for hours and guarantees long-lasting pleasure. 70 games are commercial versions - no public domain & no demos! This CD can be run on any Amiga with CD-ROM

Meeting Pearls Vol. III

The Meeting Pearls Volume III contains 650 MB of the finest FD software via a special user interface, which has been created to allow you to find the program of your choice with ease. The contents: 10 MB Packer, Cruncher, Archive Programs · 3 MB CD-ROM Utilities · 21 MB Communication and Network Programs · 5 MB Debugging Tools · 29 MB Development Tools · 13 MB Floppy, Hard Disk and SCSI Programs · 8 MB Educational Programs · 9 MB Games · 33 MB Graphics Programs · 39 MB Internet Movie Database, Updated Version · 7 MB Midi Tools and Programs · 27 MB Mods · 12 MB Music Programs · 21 MB Pictures · 13 MB AmiTCP and more for Networking · 60 MB Documentation, CD-ROM Databases, etc. · 96 MB FastTeX 1.4 - not previous available on any CD-ROM · 15 MB Utilities · 30 MB HTML-Pages · Collections of datatypes, benchmark programs, icons, programs for amateur radio and electrical/electronic engineering are also included. £9.95

da capo

The da capo CD-ROM is a source for high-quality music, both for listening enjoyment and for samples to use in creating your own music. This is not just another random collection of modules. Many modules and samples are exclusively to da capo. Included are more than 1400 of the best available modules and 2000 high-quality samples. £27.95

Gateway!

Gateway! offers NetBSD 1.0, a full featured UNIX-like operating system with both sources and binaries for the Amiga, i386, Sun 3, and other architectures. Go netsurfing with the large selection of supplied networking tools. Other supplied packages include a binary release of the X window system (X11R6) for the Amiga, with many additional clients, and packages such as perl, emacs, games, mail programs, and many megabytes of important text files such as RFCs and FAQs. A complete installation guide is available on the CD. There are also some AmigaDOS internet utilities, such as tkerm for AmiTCP and Envoy. £9.95

XiPaint V3.2

XiPaint is a leading edge, 24-bit paint program. It's suited to the demands of novice and expert alike, and within a short time, you too will be able to produce colourful and creative art in 16.6 million colours. This version of XiPaint provides a professional paint program at an unbeatable price/performance ratio.

Overview of Features: · Diverse paint functions including colour, contrast and saturation adjustment · Mask, outline, recolour and fill functions · Airbrush with adjustable spray functions · Lightmable function for manipulating images and animations · Text functions with anti-aliasing using Compugraphic fonts · Support for a variety of graphic formats · Unlimited Undo · Diverse manipulation of alpha channel · Supports many graphic cards · Layers to combine different projects · Arexx port · Drag & Drop colours · External filter module · Extensive documentation · 60 textures, 50 landscapes, 30 other pictures and many fonts included. £49.95

The Light Works

Raytracing - A fascinating area of the computer graphics. Pictures, from the computer, perfectly rendered, fascinate people all over the world. The Amiga was the first computer to be used for raytracing, and today it is still a leader, with many high quality programs. A real artist of raytracing is Tobias J. Richter from Cologne/Germany, whose detailed objects stun the people. Especially his space ships of famous science fiction films are used to demonstrate the capabilities of a raytracing program. The objects are highly detailed and extremly realistic due to the application of complex surface textures of the models. Until now it was difficult to acquire these objects in order to create ones own scenes or animations. £29.95

NetNews Offline Vol. 1

NetNews Offline Vol. 1 is the first disk of a new bimonthly published series of Amiga CD-ROMs which contains all Amiga-related newsgroups from the internet. Every volume features about 50.000 articles which contain hot rumours, important information about all aspects of the Amiga, press-releases, discussions and flame wars. A newsreader is included. NetNews Offline is the cheap alternative of getting in touch with Usenet. £14.95

All products are available in your local Amiga-shop or through national mail-order-companies

International Distributor:

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Fax +49-6171-8302
EMail: Compuserve 100336,1245

SCHATZTRUHE

CD Round Up

David Ward harvests *AUI's* crop of CDs and finds out that this month's tractorful is not all coming up roses.

AGA Experience

Don't take any notice of the back insert on this CD. It may be upside down, it may tell you that the disc only works with AGA Amigas and then with ANY Amiga running WB2, and it can't seem to make it mind up as to whether it has been produced by SAdENESS or SAdNENESS PD. What is of interest are the contents.

On the disc we find animations, demos - both by coding groups and commercial concerns, games, pictures, and utilities. All have been selected to show off the capabilities of an AGA machine equipped with a CD-ROM drive.

In addition to the above there is a section for diskmags and slideshows. NFA's own quality mags are to be found here along with their efforts at picture reels. Only one 'Bodyshop' title for young boys - Big Girls. Ten pictures of beautiful women of average size.

The main idea was to have as much as possible 'ready-to-run' straight from the CD. Unfortunately many of the Demos and Diskmags require booting from floppy, so that they have to be uncompressed to df0: using DMS.

Apart from the problem with the back cover insert, I only found one other... is there no other colloquial word for mistake that programmers need to use that does not refer to some rude part of the body? Anyway if you want to run the CD from a CD32 then you need the following - Weird Science's Network 2 CD (see below).

Once this system is set-up you can operate the disc remotely from your main Amiga - in my case a souped-up A500+. This is necessary because if you double-click the 'Click Me' icon on AGA Experience, you will get the message "Cannot find your tool IconX".

This minor error can be overcome with some judicious copying to and fro and editing of the offending file and its icon.

RATINGS

Rating 90%

INFO

Price: £19.95
Publisher: SAdENESS PD
Formats: AGA Amiga

Aminet 8

I could say "See last month's *AUI* for the review", but that wouldn't be right or fair, even though much of what was said in December's issue could equally refer to the new disc 8 as it did to disc 7. These CDs are the best.

As usual each disc has a particular leaning and Aminet 8 has been graced with just under half a gig of music modules. "Two thousand of a very high quality" according to the compilers.

No doubt disc 9 will already be out by the time you read this review. Take my word for it, no matter what's on the disc, the Aminet series is worth having. Buy it. Regardless.

RATINGS

Rating 94%

INFO

Price: £14.95
Publisher: Schatzruhe
Format: Amiga

TurboCalc V2.1

CD has now become a standard medium in the PC and Mac world for delivering multi-megabyte software. Photoshop, for instance, comes on a CD-ROM from which you then install to hard disk.

Amiga CDs have been somewhat different, until now. Previous discs have mainly been repositories for shareware data. Bucket loads of public domain, shovelware, and such like, with only a

handful of programs running directly from the disc.

Now this is to change, and one of the first 'single program, runable direct from CD' pieces of software has been released by Schatzruhe.

TurboCalc is a professional quality spreadsheet program that has been around for quite some time now on floppy. The decision to launch it on (from) CD came unexpectedly. How can a piece of software that once occupied a floppy disk now take up over 600Mb? It doesn't.

Part of the answer lies in the fact that no printed manual is supplied. Information on how to use the spreadsheet is stored on the disc as illustrated AmigaGuide documents, of just over 1Mb each, for both Workbench 2.x and 3.x operating systems.

The version 2.1 software takes up slightly over half a meg, while the demo for the new version 3.5 is again about 1Mb. Add them all together and you get just under 4 megs total. Now add to that the size of the German version. Throw in localized copies for France and Italy, but without manuals, and you end up with a CD with only 8.9Mb on it.

But you have to admit that it is the best way to distribute it. No need to have different manuals printed for each country, or floppies duplicated. Just press one, cheap, CD. Simple.

The insert booklet tells you that you can obtain the upgrade version of TurboCalc, with printed manual, for the reduced price of $52 by sending off the special form. Is it worth it?

Now some of you may never have heard of TurboCalc, so I think I had better enlighten you.

TurboCalc started off in life as a shareware program. Schatzruhe started out as a PD library, then became a budget software company, and then took on TurboCalc when Michael Friederich, Turbo Calc's author, wanted to make some money from his prodigy.

Today TurboCalc is Germany's best selling Amiga spreadsheet, and Schatzruhe are one of the leading Amiga software suppliers. Perhaps they used TurboCalc to improve their business.

Anyway, spreadsheets are very powerful programs... in the right hands. Apart from being able to total columns and rows of figures, perform complex maths on data, generate graphs and charts, they can also be used as databases.

There is very powerful ARexx support and a macro scripting language within TurboCalc. It also supports 3D spreadsheets. Okay, you are puzzled by that one. Say you run a company. Each month you have sales figures, profit, losses, staff costs, and so on. All this data is entered into a spreadsheet. You may even do this weekly.

When several sheets have been completed, they can be linked so that you have rows, columns, and time. Now do you

see what I'm getting at. Therefore you can ask TurboCalc to do a forecast for you, using those figures, and find the hidden trends.

Tempted? With everything being on the one CD, manuals, help files, tutorials, and examples, it obviously makes life that little bit easier than struggling with a handful of floppies.

RATINGS

Rating 91%

INFO

Price:TBA
Publisher: Schatzruhe
Format: Amiga

Network CD 2

If you want to get your Amiga to communicate with the outside world, then Network 2 is the disc for you. Parnet, Sernet, Twin Express, Ncomm, they're all here. But the main feature of Network is its ability to turn your CD32 into a useful addition to your Amiga, rather that a grey box for playing games on.

The long awaited Commodore A1200 with a built-in CD-ROM drive has always existed. It's just that the CD32 was limited by not having a sensible array of ports - parallel, SCSI, keyboard, or standard serial. Luckily, it does have some sort of serial port and this is where Network comes into its own in conjunction with the appropriate cable.

Network is also supplied with a special boot floppy. Hard disk users can install the software on it, while those without will not. It's about time you bought one.

Once inserted into the CD32, Network boots to a Workbench screen and then polls the serial port. You can see it doing this as

the power light intermittently fades. Click on the floppy's Remote_Sender icon and you are presented with a range of options. For Sernet there are four preset speeds.

The faster your Amiga normally runs, the higher the transfer speed you can safely use. I found that 72,000 was stable on my 28MHz machine. Once this has been done the two machines automatically configure themselves for communication. The only user intervention required is to close the Shell and terminal windows on the main Amiga.

When up and running you use your mouse to open icons on both machines. Move the pointer off the left edge of the screen on your Amiga and then see it appear on the right side of the CD32's Workbench screen. Incredible but true.

Click on the Network icon on your Amiga's screen and you can access and run stuff on the CD32. Click on the same icon on the CD32 and you can access Ram: and Sys: on your Amiga. If you are really macho you could use the software keyboard emulator on the CD32, but I preferred to copy items across for editing and then back again for running. To get the best out this arrangement you must know how to create scripts.

Apart from the networking software there is also a large collection of images, LSD legal tools, animations, demos, and a PhotoCD conversion utility. All in all a very handy disc to have if you own an Amiga and a CD32 or CDTV.

RATINGS

Rating 95%

INFO

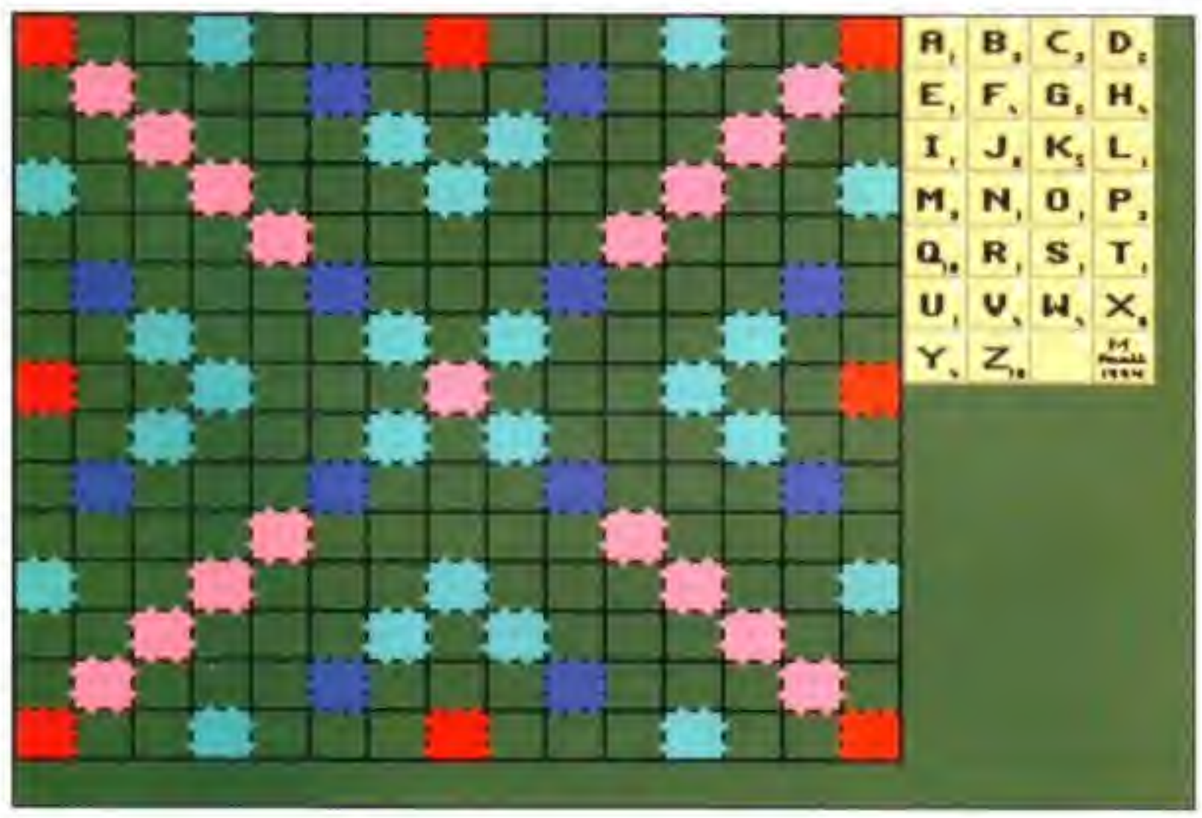
Price: £14.95
Publisher: Weird Science
Amiga

CD Round Up

ULTIMATE GAMES 2

What a wonderful disc. The Assassins have put together a CD packed full of shareware games. Most will run on any Amiga, including CDTV and CD32. You get a choice of interface; mouse or remote control, and comprehensive AmigaGuide documentation.

Throw in some networking software, a load of handy utilities, 250 Assassins games disk in DMS format plus a further 60 util disks similarly archived and you've got a winner.



LSD Compendium Deluxe 3

This disc got off to a bad start. I opened the window and found two icons reminiscent of all things bad from the pre-2.0 days. Clicking on 'Welcome', I was catapulted into the arms of the Guru courtesy of a bad copy command.

Wading through the disc I discovered the usual games, demos and diskmags, music modules, and pictures. The graphics all appeared, to me, not to have originated on the Amiga. Amiga artists have a certain flair, an originality. These pictures conveyed 'pee cee' to me.

Each part of the disc had an index document in a supposedly AmigaGuide format. It was not quite correct as my directory manager rarely launched AmigaGuide to read it. Instead I had to rely more often on the built-in text reader.

Quite a lot of the software on this disc is in the form of DMS archives, or Lha archives in the case of the various text files. A laughable one that I came across was called Online and is about communications. The author states that you must not read it unless you pay the shareware fee! A typical MS-DOS attitude.

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RATINGS

Rating 93%

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Price: £19.99
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FORGET THE DEAD TREES

"Ich bin ein Frankfurter" boasts Anthony Mael, booking his ticket for a visit to a sign of the coming technological times.

Do you know entertainment?

Even CD-ROM-shaped TVs.

When is book not a book? A girl I know took a very snooty attitude recently about them. "I love books.", said this Edinburgh University recent graduate. Yet she looked down her nose with what was almost contempt at the idea that there could be such a thing as an "electronic book", a CD-ROM. "It's not something I'm interested in. It's not for me.", she said.

Such callow snobbery about books - printing on dead trees, as the Internet fans call them - was not, however, very evident at the Frankfurt Book Fair. This is the largest fair of its kind in the world, and was held recently for the professionals in the Gutenbergian means of communication.

But there, among the huge Fair halls filled with mashed up dead tree stuff were two, equally huge, halls for the latest development in the book world - CD-ROM.

Publishing companies, very far from being dismissive of CD-ROMs and other forms of electronic communication, are eager to get into this new world and the two Halls, each about the size of Wembley Stadium, were full of them to prove it.

Interestingly what was most obvious was that the book publishers who had migrated into the electronic world had carried with them, if not their prejudices, at least their traditional ideas. There were very few CD-ROMs that presented information or entertainment - or what purported to be both - in anything but traditional ways.

Yes, the techniques of the CD-ROM were used in the 'click on it' and find the answer structure that is naturally impossible in a conventional book. Yet the real talent of multimedia presentation, whereby a subject can be made far more exciting and informative, didn't seem, in general, to have been properly exploited or perhaps even understood.

Entertainment?

Entertainment is familiar to all of us informed users and some recognisable names were there making

CDs are getting more important and bigger all the time.

150,000 companies in 25 countries.

their presence known to more than the usual games playing community. Mindscape, owned by the giant Pearson Group, were showing their latest PC games.

As most of the visitors, at least during the four Trade days out of the five days the Fair runs, were middle aged international publishing gents or somewhat trendy Sloane Ranger type girls, there was something of a bemused look about them when they ventured onto Mindscape's stand to experience the thrills of Silent Hunter, Air Power, and SU-27 Flanker.

The unfamiliarity of the average visitor with games, a very definitely 'non-book' field, was clear from one games distributor's stand that needed to ask "Do you know entertainment?" The answer in most cases would certainly have been "No". Games publishers are used to overcoming ignorance and publicising themselves in unusual ways, and other more traditional publishers at the Show were not averse to this either. One company presented its software through a hole in the Wall - the Berlin Wall, an apparent section of which it had built in the Hall. That seemed, to some visitors, in somewhat dubious taste.

We like books, you can stick your CDs on the...

The disc duplication companies also took some unusual ways of presenting themselves too. The ubiquitous Warner of Time Warner had a giant sized disc as the main attraction.

The duplicators are increasing their capacity all the time, as across the globe CD becomes the accepted method of storage. I was told that the total world capacity now exceeds 100,000,000 per month, and that is expected to rise vastly as the resources and demand of China begin to take effect in the next few years.

It seems that the publishing fraternity both fear, and gaze with eager eyes, at that country's one billion population of potential 'readers'. They fear China because it has been estimated that 95% of all CDs there are pirated. Many of these discs are duplicated by State-owned manufacturing companies, or rather Army-owned factories. Unsurprisingly, publishers are unwilling to barge into China and start banging their fists on the table with silent and inscrutable - or possibly furious and menacing - army officers at the other end.

Nevertheless, publishers know that such an emerging nation has enormous needs for information, and probably entertainment too. Anyone who can get that business out of a market with the huge potential of China may well have found the pot of gold at the end of the CD rainbow.

Familiar names in unfamiliar places bemused the visitors.

Big Fees

Though no-one seems to have made fortunes yet out of CD, there are some areas which look profitable. The environment, for instance, is well catered for with interesting maps, directories, and children's stuff. As geographical information is so suitable for multimedia, it is hardly astonishing that there were many programs with information, maps, and so on.

These are great to look at and easy to make into something interesting. Some, like American company Mountain High Maps, supply what is really clip art free of copyright for home users, educational institutions, or other publishers to use.

Copyright is becoming one of the big issues with multimedia and there was a conference at the Fair about this difficult subject. As the spread of CD and the Internet across the world becomes more noticeable, the lawyers are rubbing their hands in joyful anticipation of big fees as the copyrights of every kind of 'content' get fought over.

The European Union has already brought out a document, The Bangemann Report - named after the European Commissioner who headed the investigation, on intellectual property. Both the Report and the whole matter of copyright were discussed at length at the Fair, but there are as yet no proper guidelines as to how copyright should be applied in multimedia.

The European Union itself publishes many CDs, and seems the king, or rather president, of the directory publishing field. Everything from lists of manufacturing companies to grant giving organisations can be found on their CDs - which from the brief look I saw were doubtless informative, but also very useful for anyone suffering from insomnia.

If you are into directories, Euro Pages was - were - offering details of 150,000 companies in 25

Forget the Dead Trees

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 65

countries and they were throwing in an economic dictionary of 7,000 key business terms in six languages for free. For those needing to know about multimedia itself there was the Multimedia Yearbook with a free CD costing a mere £135.

Not a directory but an encyclopaedia... CDs are, of course, excellent for storing such information and now you can get the acme of encyclopaedias all one disc. Encyclopaedia Britanica had not one, but two separate stands at the Fair. We gave them your address and they'll be knocking at your door soon to tell you about it.

Kids' Stuff

Everyone is keen on their children being able to read, and the follow on from that is the user-friendliness, perhaps, of the Multimedia PC. Selling around the world in their tens of thousands, giving the kids the excitement of electronic education, Children's CDs abounded. And they will probably continue to saturate the CD market.

Maybe it is easier to create CDs for kids who tend to be less demanding of a high standard of creativity. Certainly, if a CD-ROM reaches a high quality, such as some of those products being de-veloped by companies like Dorling Kindersley, then it will be even more successful.

Voyager - "The single best source of innovative CD-ROMs".

Maps - from GeoSystems for education and information.

Though DK's current offerings are not really so much multimedia as fairly basic electronic books, the future products they were showing at the Fair look very impressive. However, the cost of spending long development times, and putting large teams to work on creating something special, may not turn out to be financially so viable as publishing quite simple CDs. Kids get these as presents and soon forget - and then Mum and Dad have to buy some more, don't they? Which is how the toy and the video game markets have always worked.

Some children's CDs were certainly worth playing with. Running Press, from the USA, has two which used the medium both creatively and provided plenty of information in a very clever way. Dinosaur Hunter's Kit was one bright idea. Dinosaurs are universally popular now, though perhaps they weren't with the other beings that shared the Earth at that time. And Hunter's Kit entertained and educated by using the popularity of the animated Jurassicos combined with the thrill of a chase.

Now Voyager

Not all was kids' stuff or boring lists. One CD publisher always stands out for its creativity and adventurousness. Voyager was founded in 1984, so must be one of the longest established in the field. They built their successful business on sheer creativity.

The New York Times has called them, "..the single best source of stimulating, innovative CD-ROM titles.." And rightly so. Voyager are consistently exciting in their variety of material and now have a catalogue of over 300 titles.

Some of those titles are mouth-watering just to read about. How about "Puppet Motel", in which Voyager say "Laurie Anderson, America's premier performance artist blurs the boundaries between performer and audience..." and invites you to "Explore a luminous world saturated with her passionate intelligence, where nebulae whirl, words turn to smoke, music is everywhere and time travels both ways." Wow! Now that sounds like real multimedia, doesn't it?

Other titles include "Cinema Volta" - about the transforming power of electricity, "Take Five" - how to relax with your computer, and "Defending Human Attributes in the Age of the Machine". Here the guru of interface design, Donald Norman, calls for the humanising of technology. On his CD he "transforms the computer screen into a three dimensional space that explores, critiques and turns inside out." Double wow to that!

Books, They're not

The Frankfurt Book Fair was an interesting contrast. The traditional books were there in their thousands, if not millions, but the CD, which last year, had just one, this year had two Halls. A sign of the coming technological times.

Many of the CDs at the Fair don't sound very exciting products, and they aren't, but what they are is a very comprehensive way of providing large amounts of information in the most usable and economic format. Books, they're not.

Those forthcoming technological times that they herald may not please the snobs who contemptuously reject what may happen to their beloved book. Probably there were superior beings who, when Gutenberg started printing books, didn't care for them at all, but only valued those beautifully illustrated tomes, handmade by monks, that now rest in museums.

Hunt down the Jurassicos!

There was, as far as I could see, not one CD for the Amiga in either of the vast Halls. Now this was in Frankfurt, in Germany, and isn't Escom a German company? Don't you think that with thousands of professional visitors an Amiga presence would have been worthwhile?

So far as I know, I was the only representative of the Amiga world there. PC, Apple, piles of CD-ROMs, and no Amiga in the fastest growing market in computerdom. It makes you sick, doesn't it? ***AUI***

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Hard Driving

What's the most important add-on you could buy for your Amiga today? Without question it is the hard drive. The key to using them successfully is knowledge, and Alan Lewis provides a complete, yet easy-to-understand guide to everything you always wanted to know about hard drives, but didn't have the cheek to ask.

Hard drives, like this sexy Maxtor, don't come much smaller or better built.

A hard disk is probably the most important add-on you can buy for your Amiga, and will almost transform it into a new computer, as you are freed from the sluggishness of a floppy based system. We will look at what a hard disk is and how it works, and what to look for when buying one. Later we'll be looking at how to maximise its potential, and improve your usage of it.

I am assuming you have at least Kickstart/Workbench 2 or higher. If not, then upgrade now! Kickstart 1.2 cannot autoboot a modern hard disk, and although Kickstart 1.3 can, it is a dated and obsolete system.

What is a hard disk?

A hard disk is really just a very fast floppy disk, but one that holds a lot more than a traditional floppy! Oh, and you can't remove it, of course. There are exceptions to this; removable hard drives, typical examples being the Syquest EZ drive and the Panasonic PD drive.

Hard drives get their name because the disks themselves are made of rigid, magnetically coated platters. More often these are made from aluminium alloy, but hi-tech ones are produced from glass. There are several such platters in a hard drive.

A hard drive holds more information, and delivers it quicker, due to the recording density and rotation speed of the platters. An Amiga floppy disk has 80 tracks of data, and spins at about 300 revolutions per minute, or 5 revolutions per second. A 3.5" hard disk, by comparison may have thousands of tracks per platter, and spins at 3,600 rpm! Hard drives come in sub-2", 2.5", 3.5", and 5.25" sizes. The middle two being the most popular.

Since there are many more

tracks per platter, the tracks are obviously very fine, and so a correspondingly fine read/write head is used. Also, the magnetic strength of the track is relatively weak. Otherwise, the tracks would be affected by the magnetic fields of adjacent tracks. Therefore, the read/write head is extremely close to the surface of the disk - the distance is measured in thousandths of an inch. The heads themselves actually ride on a cushion of air inside the drive, and must operate in a clean, dust free environment. For this reason, the disks are sealed inside the drive and are not removable, unlike floppy disks. Even a speck of dust between the drive head and the disk surface could cause a catastrophic failure, or 'head crash'.

Storing Data

On each hard disk platter there are pairs of concentric tracks. These form a cylinder. This might be hard to understand, as there is nothing cylindrical about a disk! Think about it like this, if you took a track on platter 1 as one end of a cylinder, and the track of platter 2 underneath, you have the two ends of a cylinder. A very short cylinder, but a cylinder all the same.

Tracks are broken down into sectors, which hold the data. A hard disk generally has 34 sectors per track. For comparison, a floppy disk has only 11 sectors per track. A sector is the basic storage unit of a disk.

Files

The next concept is that of files. To most of us, programs and data are entirely separate. Programs do things, and generally produce data. A program could be a game or word processor, for example. Data could be a high score table or saved game, or a letter created on a word processor. However, to the hard disk, they are all the same thing, they are all 'data'. To avoid confusion, we call the data on a disk 'files'. Files, therefore, can be programs, data, or whatever.

Each sector holds 512 bytes of data. Of course, a file may be many kilobytes in size, and so occupy many sectors. It may also be smaller than 512 bytes, and so occupy less than a sector.

However, a sector can only hold one file, or 512 bytes of that file. It cannot hold anything to do with another file, no matter how much room is left. How do you know where the files are then, and what sectors they occupy? You don't! AmigaDos and the drive look after this for you.

Remember cylinders? They also play a role in the high speed of a hard disk. When a drive is active, the drive heads on each platter do not move independently of each other, they all move to the same position of each track at the same time. It would not make sense then, for only one head to read or write a file. All the heads are used.

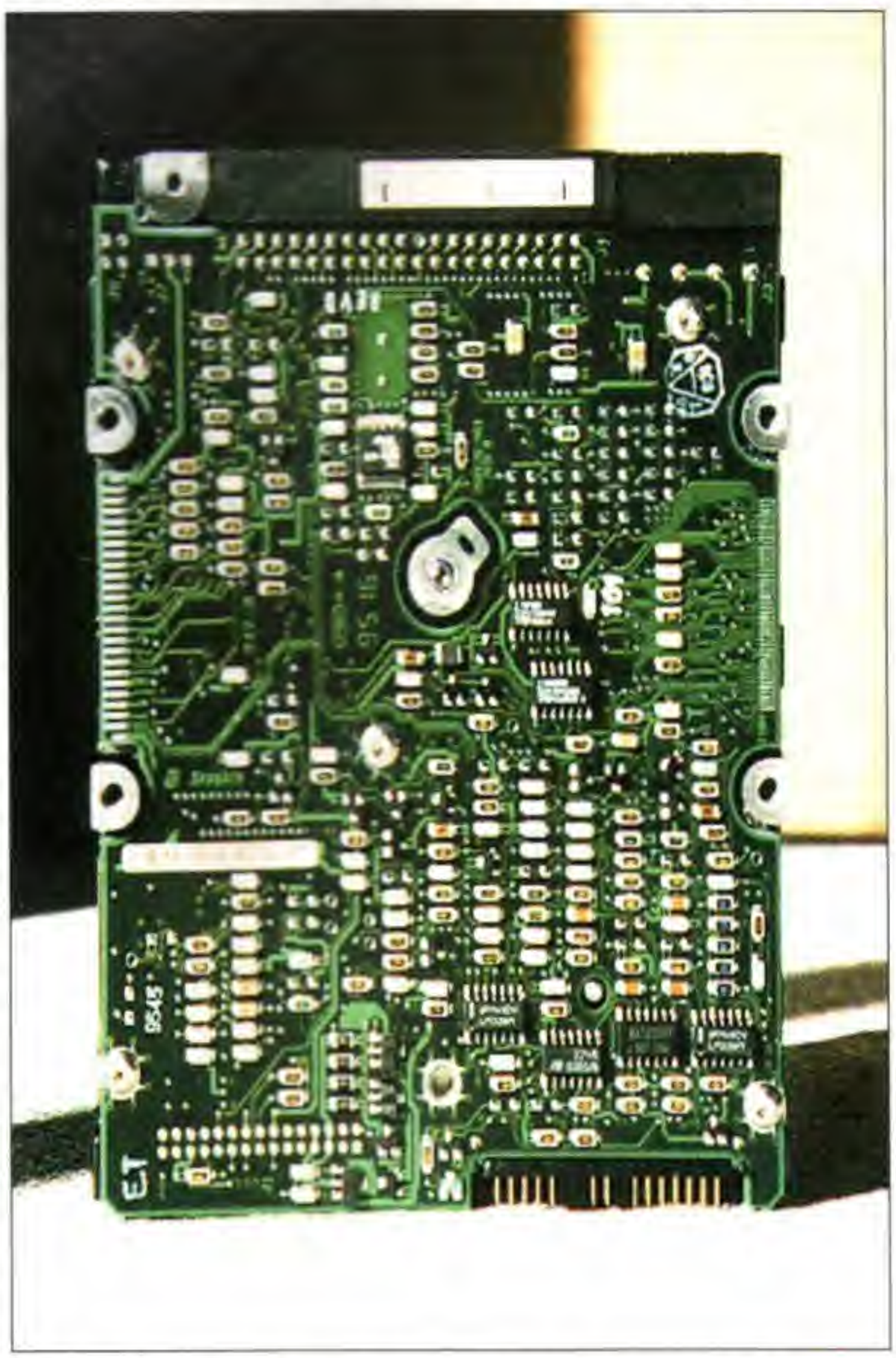
Let's assume we are writing a file to a drive with four platters and four heads: First, sector 1 of track 1 on the first platter would be written. At the same time sector 1 of track 1 on the second platter would be written. The same happens on platters 3 and 4. By this time the disk has rotated one sector, and sector two is written to on all the platters. If the file is large, it may occupy more than the 34 sectors available on each track on all the platters combined, so the heads will move in a track, and the process repeats. If only one head were used, then we would have to step the head four times for every track written, compared to the once in the former method. The process of moving a head from one track to another is called track stepping.

The idea of a cylinder may now be clearer. The platters are in the horizontal, and the sectors of each track are vertically above each other. Therefore, we have an imaginary vertical cylinder.

Drive Speeds

Typically, drives are quoted as having a speed in milliseconds (ms). Modern hard drives average 11ms or less. The figure quoted is the seek time, and is the average time the drive takes to move the drive heads to any track on the disk, and settle. Some may quote track-step times, which should be less than 3ms.

Some drives are advertised as being capable of transferring x megabytes per second. However, these claims are not all that important. In most cases the drive transfer figure is the maximum theoretical throughput of the electronics on the drive, and not how fast the drive can read or write data to and from the disk. You must always consider the time that the drive has to work out where to put the data, and then move the drive heads accordingly.



Surface mount technology has enabled designers to squeeze more electronics into the drives.

Controllers

The Amiga, like other computers, cannot just have a hard disk plugged into it. It needs an interface, which controls the flow of data between the drive and computer. There are two main types the Amiga can use: IDE and SCSI.

IDE is short for Integrated Drive Electronics. This is a standard that originated in the PC world. Prior to IDE, the computer had to work in conjunction with a controller card to handle much of the work of transferring data to and from the drive. IDE put the controller within the drive and gave it some intelligence, which frees up the computer and makes the drive faster as a result.

The Amiga 600, 1200, and 4000 all have an IDE interface built into the motherboard. IDE interfaces can only handle 2 drives, although the newer E-IDE allows for 4, and even some CD-ROMs. However, the A600 and A1200 internal interface is limited to one drive, although you can always fit an external interface and drive later. IDE interfaces are often referred to as AT interfaces, a hangover from the PC world, but not to be confused with the IBM AT.

SCSI - for Small Computer Systems Interface, is a standard designed to control almost any type of peripheral that could be attached to a computer, not just hard drives. There are SCSI tape drives, CDs, scanners, and even printers available. SCSI interfaces can handle up to 7 devices, are more versatile and, in general, faster than IDE. SCSI has recently undergone several developments, resulting in the new SCSI-3 standard.

Some interfaces are also quoted with impressive transfer rates, often as high as 20Mb/sec. However, these claims are not very significant. Just as with quoted drive speeds, the figure is often the maximum theoretical throughput. In the real world, the figure is less as the

Hard Driving

CONTINUED

computer and interface cannot talk to each other that fast. In practice, a drive is often much faster than the interface.

Interfaces

The interface depends on your Amiga, your requirements, and your budget. The older Amigas, the A500 and 1500/2000 do not have in-built interfaces, so you need to think carefully about which type to get. A SCSI interface generally costs more initially, but will let you add more devices later as your budget allows. If you only want to add the one hard drive, then IDE/AT is the better option. Both Visage Computers and Gasteiner sell IDE interfaces for the A500 and B2000, and Visage also sell a SCSI-2/IDE interface for the B20-00, giving you the best of both worlds.

A500 SCSI interfaces are attached to the side expansion slot and include models by GVP, Supra, Commodore, ALF and RocHard. B2000 interfaces come in the form of a card that fits a Zorro II slot inside the Amiga. Zorro II controller cards were made by Supra, Nexus, Octagon, and Data-Flyer.

Also consider an accelerator card with an on-board SCSI interface. This will speed up your Amiga, and give you blistering drive performance. GVP made the best such interface, the GVP A530 for the A500, and the G-Force range for the B2000. GVP were bought by

Power Computing sometime ago, although the UK dealer, Silica, may have some still in stock. Visage also sell a 68030 accelerator card with SCSI-2 interface. Many are available second hand, including the RCS Fusion Forty, and the PP&S Mercury and Zeus cards.

A few years ago, a serious user considering a SCSI hard disk had to decide on a DMA or non-DMA type. This was as complicated as a can of worms, covering whether the drive fed data directly to memory, or whether it went via the CPU. Some interfaces caused problems when used with accelerator cards, because of how they transferred data. This is not an issue for AGA Amigas, though if you own an older Amiga and are considering buying an old SCSI interface and are concerned about these issues, then contact the ***AUI*** Amiga Answers section.

If you have an A3000, you have a SCSI interface built-in. Both the A3000 and A4000 come with a hard drive as standard, and the A600 and A1200 are available with hard drives ready fitted.

SCSI is also available for the A1200 and A4000, as are combined accelerator/SCSI cards. For the A1200, these fit into the trap-door expansion socket. A4000 owners with deep pockets can buy immensely powerful 68040 and 68060 cards with on-board SCSI-2 interfaces that deliver amazing hard disk performance. With the advent of the A4000 and its Zorro III expansion slots, there were several fast SCSI cards available, notably the Fastlane Z3 and the DKB4091 card. Unfortunately, since the demise of Commodore, these appear to have been discontinued.

The A4000 can use many older cards designed for the B2000. A word of warning though. Many older SCSI cards will not work properly, if at all, in an A4000. If you are offered one of these second hand, test it to ensure it will work in your system.

Try to ensure that your interface card and software support the Rigid Disk Block standard. Apart from correctly auto-booting your hard drive, and ensuring that any other drives or partitions are auto-mounted, it theoretically allows you to remove the hard disk from your Amiga, and plug it into the interface of another Amiga. It can then be used straight away without having to be re-prepped, which would erase the data on it. Furthermore, let's assume you prepped your hard disk with the Kickstart 2 filing system, and then you upgrade to Kickstart 3.1, which has a superior filing system. Without RDB, you would have to either continue using the older filing system, or backup your hard disk, reprep it with the new system, and then restore the data to it. RDB automatically uses the newest filing system it finds on the disk or in ROM.

RDB simply reserves two tracks of the hard disk and writes (stores) some information concerning the drive there, along with a copy of the filing system code. It is very much like the boot block of an Amiga floppy disk. RDB is normally only found on SCSI drives, however. As far as I am aware, only the ICD AdSCSI failed to support it.

Big box Amigas can also use very cheap PC IDE interfaces, with the added advantage of extra parallel and serial ports, by using the GoldenGate Bus card, reviewed in the September 95 issue of ***AUI.***

A special mention now for the Squirrel SCSI interface, which fits into the PCMCIA port of the A600 and A1200. It is probably the best bet for anyone looking for either a SCSI interface, or considering adding a hard disk. It will happily handle DAT drives, CD-

ROMs, removable drives, and so on. The software is well written, and allows you to configure your SCSI setup, play audio CDs on a CD-ROM drive that supports audio data over the SCSI bus, and use CD32 titles. Admittedly, it does not autoboot, so unless you already have a hard disk you have to rely on a boot floppy disk.

Or rather you did... because HiSoft have developed Squirrel 2. It's hard to see how Squirrel could be improved, but they have done it! Squirrel 2 offers everything its predecessor had, plus autobooting. It is at least twice as fast, and comes with its own high speed serial interface. All the drivers are now multitasking and allow the Amiga more of the CPU processor time. All this is good news for Amiga users, and if you ever wanted to run a dual line BBS from an A1200, now you can! The price? A mere £99.95.

HiSoft are also offering an upgrade path for owners of the older Squirrel interface. Very commendable; it is also the first time I have heard of an upgrade path for hardware owners!

Big and Fast

Once you have decided which interface to use, you need a hard drive to go with it. The best advice, often given here by Andy Eskelson, ***AUI's*** Amiga Answers Guru, is to buy the biggest and fastest you can afford! Most companies will advertise interfaces with drives, the bigger the drive the more expensive everything becomes. You can, of course, buy a interface from one company and a drive from another, but make sure the drive uses the same interface as the controller - it would be a shame to buy an IDE drive only to find it will not work with your SCSI interface!

First, determine what your needs are. Everyone should have a hard drive, but not everyone needs the same size. If you only play games, a 40Mb drive will probably suffice. If you create huge ray traced files, or use serious multimedia applications, then you may be looking at upwards of a gigabyte of storage space. Drive prices have come crashing down over the past two years, and many PC dealers offer 540Mb IDE drives for under £100, plus VAT. SCSI drives are slightly more expensive, but still reasonably affordable

For speed, if you are buying a new drive, you have nothing to worry about. Most drives are 11ms or less. If you are buying a second hand drive, make sure the speed is less than 25ms. You won't notice the difference between a 25ms and 11ms drive, unless your work involves disk intensive applications such as sorting a database. The only other application that needs a fast drive is audio-visual work, where the data is being recorded or played back direct from the hard disk. In this case, you should buy a specialised AV drive. Brain Fowler Computers, Blittersoft and White Knight offer very good AV drives.

The difference between an AV drive and a 'normal' hard disk is quite important. A run-of-the-mill hard disk will often re-calibrate the track and head positioning while in use. This is not noticeable for day to day work, as it results in only a very slight performance drop. However, if you are playing video or audio off the disk it can cause a noticeable glitch. AV drives do not re-calibrate on the fly, and so are the only drives suitable for this kind of work.

New or second hand, ensure the drive supports Auto-parking. This means that the moment the drive senses the power has been turned off, it moves the drive heads to a safe location - either a landing zone on the disk surface, or off the disk entirely. It also means you do not have to run a 'park' utility to manually accomplish this whenever you turn the Amiga off. Auto-parking also protects the drives in case of a power failure.

If you are working to a budget though, a rough guide to working out the minimum size of your hard disk is to count all the disks of the programs you use. Consider each disk to equal roughly a megabyte of storage space. This will give you a bare minimum. Add 10-15 megabytes to this figure to store Workbench on and remember that you will also need drive space to store whatever data you create, be it documents or slideshows, artwork or music. 100Mb is a good size with which to start.

It is surprising how quickly a hard disk can become full, especially with today's software needing many megabytes of disk space. For instance, Final Writer 4 requires 12Mb for the full installation. And 24-bit images can be almost a megabyte in size, even compressed! ***AUI*** *More next month.*

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Cyberspatial Harmony

David Ward manages to get into the middle lane of the information Superhighway using a new fax/data modem.

This is a 14.4 kbps device and the fast lane is usually occupied by the boy racers and their 28.8s. Mind you, Harmony also do a souped-up version at £159, but Tiff Needell was putting that review model through its paces at Brands.

At under £90 the Harmony 14.4 is superb value for money. Remember it was only about a year ago that these devices were going for about £200.)

Cheap?

The Harmony modems are not BABT approved - no green sticker. Consequently they can be offered at a lower price compared to approved modems. This is because the long and expensive test procedures have been avoided.

This also means that UK buyers are NOT allowed to connect this device to any BT service directly, or indirectly. However some cable TV companies, who also provide telecom services, will allow such equipment to be attached to their systems. Contact your local supplier first to make sure.

Size

The Harmony is smaller than an A5 sheet of paper - that's half A4. Its dimensions being 145mm wide, by 110mm deep, and 30mm in height. The grey plastic casing is slightly darker than that of a CD32, with a smoked plastic window on the front. This has the various status codes printed on it, and hides the nine LEDs that indicate the modem's condition.

The back of the unit has a standard 25-pin D socket, the 12v AC power connector, and two American style phone sockets - one for the line connection to the wall socket. The other for a telephone handset. On top is a recessed on/off switch.

A combined plug/transformer is supplied, along with a 2 pin to 3 pin shaving type adaptor. This is fine if you plugging into a trailing socket, but a wall mounted socket tends to make the whole affair suffer from the effects of gravity.

A 6 foot lead is supplied to connect your modem to the nearest phone socket, so you should consider buying an extension as well. We all know that phone sockets are usually no where near where you computer is set up.

The modem comes with a special serial cable for connection to your computer. One end fits the modem, the other is terminated in both a 9 and 25 pin plug. So you can use this on a PC too. The length makes it desirable to mount the modem on or near your computer.

Without Error

It is a simple matter to connect everything up. The suppliers include a copy of NComm 3.0 to get you started in the world of comms, but little in the way of who to call first. NComm is surprisingly easy to set up. The modem's handbook might be frightening for the first time user, so should only be consulted as a last resort. NComm's guide is much easier to understand, and soon points you in the right direction. I had the Harmony up and running in under ten minutes, and I don't consider myself an expert in these things.

Unlike PC Labs we cannot connect modems to hi-tech telecom test equipment and then simulate use under different line conditions. All I can say is that it worked well and without error. That should be expected nowadays with the availability of cheap, quality, and off-the-shelf modem chipsets.

During my test the dog got his leg caught in the extension lead. The modem ended up suspended between desk and floor while I was on-line. No errors occurred during this heart stopping episode, so I can conclude that the error checking was working okay.

Conclusion

A neat little package that's excellent value for money. ***AUI***

RATINGS

Harmony

FEATURES	95%
PERFORMANCE	95%
INSTALLATION	85%
VALUE FOR MONEY	96%

Overall Rating 90%

INFO

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Megalosound 8bit Sampler	32.50	With SIMM as above	54.00

Virtually There!

Michael Hamish charts the progress of the Amiga and The Next Big Thing.

The Meckler VR95 Conference is one of two or three fairly large annual U.S. conferences on virtual reality. It seemed a little poorly attended this year, even though the exhibit hall was very busy. The expensive parts, the lectures, were sometimes almost empty.

One of the other regular attendees opined that the attention was all on the Internet, which probably is part of the truth. The VR scene, however, got the usual media NEW THING! hype here for two or three years, and then it wasn't new any more.

Of course, the media typically gets it half wrong and listens to the loudest voices, knowledgeable, honest, or not, so now we have the backlash phase. VR development has not noticeably slowed, yet the only significant breakthroughs that I observed were the appearance of some fairly high resolution HMDs (Head Mounted Displays) at consumer level prices - well-to-do consumers, that is.

In particular, VIRTUAL i-O Inc.'s i-glasses VGA were getting rave comments everywhere. Lightweight (8 ounce), hi-res, 3D capable, with 180,000 pixels per eye (field sequential at up to 70Hz for 3D or hi-res, flicker-free interlace), head-tracking, stereo surround sound and see-through optics. These are now distributed by Escom in Europe (See Newsfile.)

The video input and reasonable power requirement (2.5 Watt at 6VDC) mean that portable gaming or business computing applications are reasonable. The see-through optics would make it possible to even jog in the park (with some risk, it should be noted, lest this magazine be subject to lawsuits) while watching television or reading a business report off a beltpack PC or WatchMan. A cellular linked palmtop could even give you full net access anywhere, any time - except maybe swimming. The suggested price was only $799.

This is a development that those of us in VR have been eagerly anticipating for many reasons. Not only does it bring high quality VR to a much wider market, but it also potentially obsoletes most of the bulky, expensive, heavy, power-hungry CRTs. These dinosaurs that now force people to sit at desks, or cluster around a single location at home, will soon mostly drift off into oblivion. Instead TV, gaming, computing, and VR will be with us everywhere, whenever we want it.

Virtual surgery continues a rapid advance. The U.S. medical research community has real money to attract real talent. Surgical training systems have become a big piece of the VR action, with obvious spin-offs into every other VR area, especially those

involving force feedback, 3D organic modelling, or telepresence. This year they offered such realism in graphics and tactile feedback that a surgeon might be fooled at first touch and sight, although the true surgical VR Turing test will probably not be passed by a simulation any time soon.

You, Michael Hamish or anyone, can take on a virtual personality

You know you've arrived when they start offering graduate degrees.

I asked at one of the seminars if general biological modelling would include collateral effects of surgery, such as tissue swelling and consequent ischemia, were part of the current simulations. The answer was "No, but probably next year."

VR training systems have been going into companies such as Motorola on a large scale. Live training on complex real machinery is costly and hazardous, while VR training is safer, cheaper, and has proven to yield better results. Along with the news that VR is rapidly moving into the corporate environment, there were incremental advances in every other area, but again, no real breakthroughs.

There were no Amigas at this year's conference, so I decided to focus my time and energy on Amiga-related issues. However, there were several attending companies that got their start on the Amiga and were still supporting it, such as Hash, Inc., and Caligari, or the makers of VR Slingshot, who are now doing surgical simulations.

The issue of the Toaster came up, of course. Most of you probably know that Babylon 5 only exists because the Toaster allowed them to do the dynamite special effects for a small fraction of the estimated costs it would have been using tradition model methods - and, correspondingly, it was the use of the Toaster on B5 that generated the Toaster market explosion. (Most computer graphic special effects on U.S. TV are now claimed to be rendered with Toaster LightWave.)

Babylon 5, which is probably more popular here now than the current, rather lame incarnations of Star Trek (which is now using the Toaster), must be in Germany, as the entire B5 music background is directed from the Berlin Philharmonic by Christopher Franke (Tangerine Dream) via satellite link from Hollywood. Every B5 episode has unique music.

Last year I reported on the "VideoPlace" Amiga applications, such as Mandala from The Vivid Group in Toronto and CyberScape from Tensor Productions in Santa Barbara.

VideoPlaces map your image directly onto the computer screen. The computer then reacts to what you do. You see yourself on the screen inside some virtual environment and you simply reach out and touch or grab things in that environment. You can paint using your body as the brush, play musical instruments, or interact with someone else who is somewhere else via ordinary phone lines.

VideoPlace has been in development for about 25 years, pioneered by Myron Krueger - who coined the term. The software first appeared on a personal computer - the Amiga - in 1986 as Mandala, a complete multimedia authoring package that once sold for $279. On the Amiga, it required a LIVE! board ($600), for a total system cost in '87 of around $2,000. A couple of years ago, the first PC VideoPlace appeared, costing over ten times the price (around $40,000) and doing much less.

Since VR94, the U.S. Amiga scene - apart from the Toaster (which is now

Hot new shades to view a "WARPed" reality (top monitor). About 6 months ago, "Midnight Engineering" magazine covered a totally new product called WARP. (How many "WARPs" does that make now on the market?) This one gives you FAST 3D imagery via the simple expedient of photographing scenes with a fish-eye lens and then morphing the area on screen to correct for the lens. The result is the ability instantly to pan or zoom around in an apparent 3D environment that can be very large and hi-res. The WARP concept should work on any computer system, in theory, and they are licensing. Susan Wyshinsky (of Mandala fame) is the contact on this at CATINHAT@WARP.COM.

available either from NewTek as a stand-alone non-Amiga box that works with a PC, or as a sort of PC Toaster+ clone from the Play Co. - the people who split off from NewTek) - appears to be winding down. Major dealers are shutting their doors to the Amiga. The Amiga user groups are still quite active, but the VideoPlace stuff is about the only area where our baby is still the star.

Vivid Effects was at Meckler again, this time with a solid-looking Mandala arcade system that has dropped in price from last year to a measly $29,000. It is still a turnkey system running off the PC, instead of providing the full-featured authoring system it had on the Amiga.

The game that Vivid was showing had the player on a flying platform controlled against a 2D background. You fly by pointing. You shoot by touching. You try to avoid the helicopters and other things that take away points. I think that 15 minutes would be about my limit on this one. I have a copy of their 1993 promo video which shows much more interesting applications, including games.

A security systems manufacturer, at one point in the late 1980s offered an industrial security system in which surveillance cameras followed intruders by tracking their images via LIVE!. Phil Burk, who coauthored JFORTH on the Amiga and is now co-authoring the 3DO system along with R.J. Mical and other former Amiga pioneers, also wrote custom VideoPlace applications for a magician in Denmark. One of these applications could respond to facial expressions, and was used to allow a band of quadriplegics to perform music on Danish television. A lady in Massachusetts is currently authoring her own custom virtual environments on LIVE!.

Then there is Carel Strucker, the actor/director who plays Lurch in the Addams Family movies, Deana Troy's mother's butler in Star Trek:TNG, and the pawnbroker in Babylon 5, plus many roles. Carel is also a CyberScape author. I mentioned his turnkey VideoPlace application for physical therapists in last year's report. That system was shown at the Cal State Long Beach campus late in 1994 to a packed seminar hall.

It is now undergoing further development at NASA's Cape Canaveral shuttle facility, where Louise Kleba (KLEBAL@MONTAGE SKI.KSC.NASA.GOV), who runs the payload programming team for the space shuttle, is building in robotics capabilities to CyberScape.

Susan Wyshinsky's "Coolest thing" - poking around inside someoneis brain.

CyberScape has a lot of unique capabilities, such as combining up to two power gloves with the VideoPlace. In addition, Joe Shen gives you the complete source code and invites other programmers to add in capabilities as they need them. The biggest CyberScape drawback is that the manual is really very poor. You have to learn how to program it by the trial and error method, and there is no authoring interface. You write scripts and then test them.

The Vivid Group also had a project going at one point with the Canadian government to create a Mandala application to allow the disabled to control their homes. This was one of hundreds of prototypes developed by them. (It is like the early radio days, when Motorola, Philco, RCA, etc., hired hundred of engineers to design and patent every kind of circuit they could think of, just to grab a lock on the industry when it really started moving.)

How is it that products like the Amiga or VideoPlace don't take over the market, while junk like Microsoft DOS, Windows, or expensive and slow Head Mounted Display VR systems do? Here's a clue. I spoke with Linda Jacobson, one of the prominent VR personalities and a speaker at VR95, who recently published her Garage Virtual Reality textbook.

In GVR, Linda Jacobson barely mentions VideoPlace and implies that it is expensive and difficult to use, with limited application. At her VR95 GVR seminar she claimed that VideoPlace cost a minimum $15,000 to get into. Yet when I cornered her on the subject, it was clear that she was quite familiar with the current VideoPlace market, including CyberScape, which at $245 is used by Nickelodeon on prime time children's TV, at NASA, and at installations all over the U.S. supplied by Dean Friedman's InVideo (914 736-3600), or his competitor, Amusatronics (718 268-4411).

So here is Linda Jacobson, advising people in GVR to spend all kinds of effort, time and money to build fairly expensive VR systems out of industry discards, while failing to cover inexpensive technology that works! Why? I asked her.... Because it's not available on a PC or a Mac. SO WHAT?

Similarly, for years here in the U.S., reviews of products would appear in local newspapers and magazines, covering the Mac and PC, without ever mentioning the often superior Amiga version. Or worse, providing totally misleading information about Amiga products. Why? Because Commodore wasn't buying ad space, wasn't inviting the press people to expensive restaurants, and their press agency wasn't getting the press releases on-line? We, the users, sold the Amiga here, not Commodore.

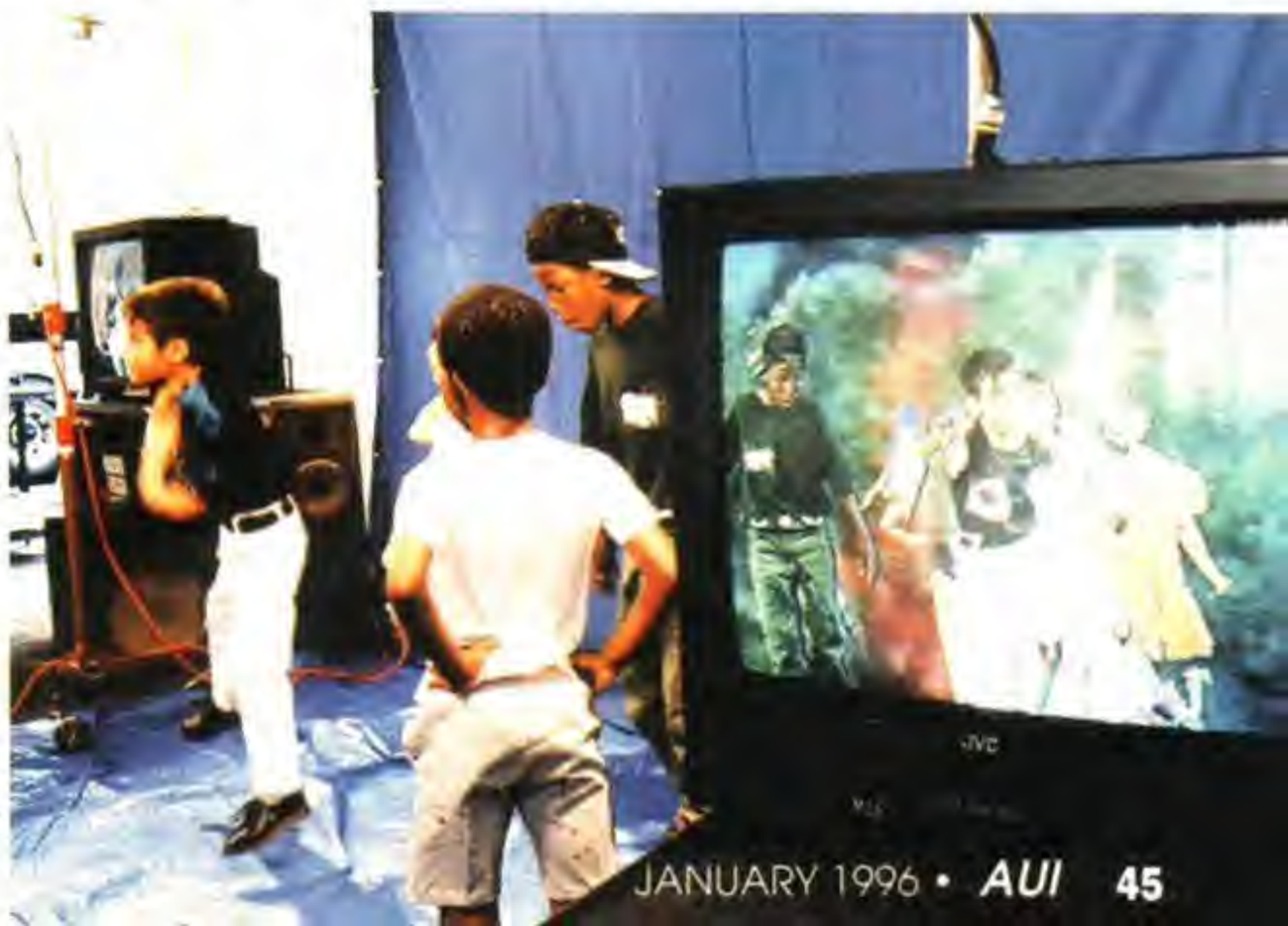
While I didn't see that much really new stuff of interest at VR95, I did attend the Electronic Entertainment Expo here in L.A. and tour the Virtual World system in Newport Beach.

The EEE was jamming. Booths from all the major gaming players were enormous multi-faceted areas that took minutes just to walk past. The 3DO/Panasonic area was hot.

Virtual World, which is all over the globe now, has developed a strong cult following with BattleTech and the Mars colony simulations.

Opportunity

Both the LIVE! board and CyberScape got some major recent press coverage in the U.S. When I got back from VR95 a call was on my machine from a friend, who was looking for LIVE! boards for his customers. One of the smaller mail order suppliers of used Amiga hardware advertised a LIVE! board and got hundreds of calls. They now have back orders for tons of them, if they ever get another one. And there is a PAL LIVE! board, although the NTSC one can be made to work on PAL. Meanwhile another friend is sitting on about 30 orders because he doesn't presently have the $15,000 capital he needs to build the boards. This lack of capital was due to the long period of time before the market began to wake up, so no orders are being filled. If anyone wants to buy into a really hot market, this might be the opportunity of a lifetime. VR is definitely The Next Big Thing. ***AUI***



A new Mandala arcade game screen.

NETWORLDS

David Ward reviews two handbooks for the Superhighway Surfer.

A Directory of Electronic Mail

The latest, the fourth, edition of this hefty tome now stretches to about 650 pages between two soft covers. Primarily targeted at network administrators, the Directory contains detail of networks worldwide. From Argentina to Zimbabwe, the Directory describes in detail what networks are in operation, and how to access them with email.

The slim User Introduction gives valuable information on how to address your mail, details on domains and sub-domains, plus message formats. The main body of the book is devoted to the commercial networks and their staff.

The most familiar to our readers would be Compuserve, Demon, and Fidonet. The least familiar probably being LEARN - Lanka Educational and Research Network. That's it. A very handy book when you need it, and cheap too, but one that you could probably live without.

INFO

Price: £7.50
Authors: Donnalyn Frey & Rick Adams

The WorldWideWeb Handbook

Half as many pages, but three times the price of the above Directory, the WorldWideWeb Handbook is described as a guide for authors, publishers, and users of HTML - the HyperText Mark-up language.

The book is divided up into three sections. The first deals with getting onto the Net. What equipment you need, software, and the various types of files you will encounter once connected.

The second section covers the different types of Web browsers available for a variety of machines, including the Amiga, while the last section tells you how to create pages in HTML for publishing on the Web.

This would be a useful book for anyone interested in getting not only onto the Web, but also into creating hypermedia documents for distribution via other means - CD-ROM, for instance. HTML is now such a universal standard that proprietary search/text engines on CDs could become a thing of the past. The day's of the platform specific CD encyclopedia are numbered.

INFO

Price: £24.95
Authors: Peter Flynn

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Termite Moves On

David Ward test drives an important communications package that has been given some handy improvements.

At first glance there is no apparent change to the software since its first incarnation in 1994.

The manual has shrunk, but where are the real improvements? First, you should know what Termite actually does in case you are not familiar with the software.

Termite is a communications package designed to allow you to connect your modem-equipped Amiga to the numerous bulletin board services (BBSs) and information providers. A Commodore (or should that be Escom now) Installer painlessly copies the required files from the master disk to your hard drive or floppy disk copy.

Now all you have to do is configure the software to run your modem. The manual takes you through a 'Quick Start' procedure in which you define the settings and paths, and enter the numbers you wish to call in the 'phonebook'. Setting up is quite easy, but for the beginner the most difficult part is who to call first. Amiga bulletin boards don't seem to advertise.

Technical bits

Termite can handle baud rates from 300 up to the latest and fastest 28 8. The faster the modem, the faster your Amiga has to keep up to provide it supplied with enough data. A basic 68000 machine, or a 1200 with no fast RAM, can manage 19,200 (double 9600), while an accelerated machine will quite happily operate at 57,600 - enough to run a 28 8. Multi-tasking and the number of colours on screen will also affect data transfer rates, and this is often forgotten.

Once you have your phone numbers you can store them in the phonebook and add them to the Dial pull-down menu. Settings can be customised for each number - one BBS may use different protocols to another - and Termite can be made to remember them.

Once connected, you can chat to your hearts content.

Protocols handled include X & YMODEM and the practically default standard ZMODEM. External ones, like XEM and XPR, are also supported.

Logging-on scripts can be created along with macros, but upgraders to v1.1 will find that their v1.0 scripts are no longer valid.

New to 1.1

Although v1.0 had a button bar capability, the new version of Termite now gives you a chance to change the path to the button settings. Other additions include the ability to select RIP in the Palette Prefs for RIP BBSs and a check box so that you can ignore serial error messages.

Every time there is a new line your Amiga has to redraw the screen. Obviously this slows things down when lots of new lines are arriving quickly. So another new option is jump scroll. When data is coming in very fast to the screen, the arriving text can be buffered and the screen updated several lines at a time. This comes highly recommended and is the best and fastest way to operate.

Sizes

The useful 'monitor' option has been moved from the Dialer (sic) window to modem settings. This is a facility that allows you to see which strings are being sent to the modem so that incorrect initialization commands can be spotted.

The Transfer Settings window has been extended to include ZMODEM options: Auto Up/Down load, keep partial files, and resume. These last two are handy when you are downloading text files and for some reason you get disconnected, you then don't lose everything. Resume will append the lost data to the already saved file when connection is re-established.

Frame and buffer sizes are also set here. The first affects the speed of your data transfers, mainly for

Termite allows easy on-line connection.

slower modems, while the second determines how much data will be stored in ram before being saved.

Conclusion

We have been using Termite v1.0 successfully here at ***AUI*** for many months now with no cause for complaint. Upgrading was inconvenient with regard to our previously defined scripts, but that was soon overcome.

The extra options, especially with regard to ZMODEM, came in very handy. ***AUI***

Amiga BBS numbers:

01 for Amiga	0171 3771358
Junction 9	01372 271000

RATINGS

Termite

FEATURES	86%
PERFORMANCE	91%
DOCUMENTATION	92%
VALUE FOR MONEY	91%

Overall Rating 89%

INFO

Price: £39.95
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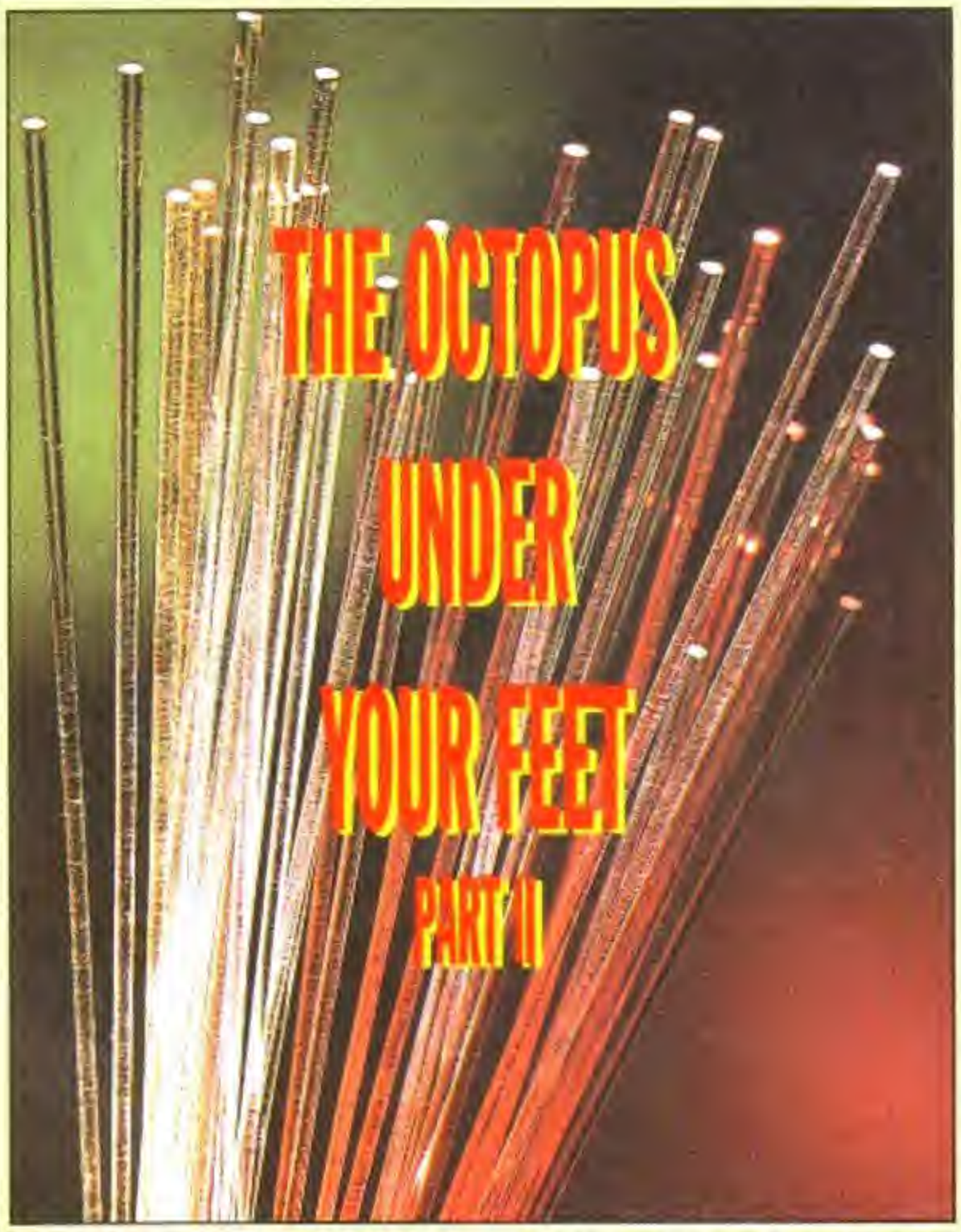
THE OCTOPUS UNDER YOUR FEET

PART II

Michael Rumbelow continues this *AUI* Special Report on the amazing developments happening beneath your feet with the ever expanding cable network. Part II examines the future of fully interactive television. So there will be no more passive viewing, couch potatoes. Now you will be in there doing it yourself.



Landscape – 'The chill-out channel'

One of the most original channels available exclusively on cable is the Landscape Channel. At first glance it looks like the kind of footage terrestrial TV channels use instead of a testcard to fill dead air time between programmes - swooping panoramic views of seagulls against a sunset in Cornwall, or meditative shots of a hot-air balloon floating over Bath, to the soothing strains of classical music. After a while though, you realise that *these* are the channel's programmes.

The Landscape Channel consists entirely of pleasant film of nature and countryside from around the world, with no adverts and no voice-over, just classical music. Shez Hamill, Marketing Director at Sussex-based Landscape, spoke to ***AUI*** about where this novel concept in TV came from and what plans they have.

Though Landscape is now only available on cable, it was conceived ten years ago as a channel for the Astra satellite. In 1985 MTV and other pop music channels were thriving in the US and elsewhere, and were just starting their astonishing growth in Britain and Europe.

However classical music, which accounts for something like 20% of the recorded music market, had practically no outlet on television. The designers of Landscape reasoned that with all the new TV channels becoming available through satellite and cable technology there was a place for a new classical music based channel. They also felt that a lot of people would welcome an alternative to the accelerated pace, information over-load, and flashy effects of most TV channels. Something to wind-down to, rather than be stressed by; a kind of relaxation channel.

With these ideas in mind they set about taking gentle pieces of classical music and putting images to them. As Shez Hamill put it: "Mozart isn't around any more to make videos for his music", so the Landscape crew do their best to make films that complement the classical music soundtracks.

The emphasis is on quality; the Senior Producer, Mike Appleton, used to produce The Old Grey Whistle Test and other quality music programmes at the BBC. He makes sure that the Landscape camera operators, in-house and freelance, always use film and never video.

The results are usually edited in-house at their own production suite. The style of the programmes, which are more like extended music videos, is thoughtful. They are often based around one scene or natural feature, exploring and meditating on the image. "Not like some of our imitators" says Hamill, disdainfully, "who often jerk insensitively from one image or theme to another, haywire."

LANDSCAPE

To date the Landscape recipe of high-quality, well-produced films of nature to a classical soundtrack, has been a considerable success - over 70% of UK cable operators now carry the channel. As there is no voice-over, the content can be sold unchanged to foreign-language cable and satellite channels, which is one of Landscape's fastest growing markets. With such an apparently successful formula, is there any reason to change? Recent market research suggests there might be.

Late-night Chilling Station?

Along with their growing popularity, Landscape have recently faced an unexpected drop in the average age of viewers. The channel was always aimed at a more mature age-group than pop music channels like The Box or MTV, but in the last year or so surveys have shown that large numbers of young people have been tuning in, especially on Friday and Saturday nights. Hamill attributes this new audience to clubbers, turning to Landscape as an 'ambiental' channel to relax to when they come home after a night out. The channel is "not discouraging that image", so does this mean that Landscape might change the style of some of its programming to cater specifically for this new found youth audience. Perhaps playing electronic ambiental music as well as classical?

At present it is difficult, according to Hamill, because Landscape provide their channel to cable operators on tape, so they have no control over what time what is broadcast. With the channel boom expected in the next year or so, when new digital-format broadcasting takes off, they are hoping to get their own live digital feed to satellite or cable. Once they are broadcasting live, then, yes, they would like to make programmes especially for this late-night audience.

If Landscape do make the big step of including computer video effects and electronic chill-out music in their films, it will be interesting to see if they use the Amiga. Already used for making graphics effects demos, creating electronic visuals in clubs around the country, and with so many cable stations already using live feeds from Amigas for local information, it would be a small step to broadcasting ambiental Amiga visuals live.

For more information call The Landscape Channel 01424 830 688

Typical subject of a Landscape programme, to an appropriate classical music soundtrack.

Cable on line - High-Speed Cable Internet links to the Home

CableTel are one of the top five big cable companies in the UK. This summer they became one of the first cable companies to also provide Internet access.

Initially their Internet operation, called Cable On-line, will operate more or less independently as a standard Internet service provider, in this growing, lucrative market. Cable On-line plan to install over seventy points of presence (or 'pops', the local servers you can dial-up with a modem to connect to the Internet) around the country. These will offer standard dial-up access to the Internet, at local call rate, to about 90% of the population by mid-1996.

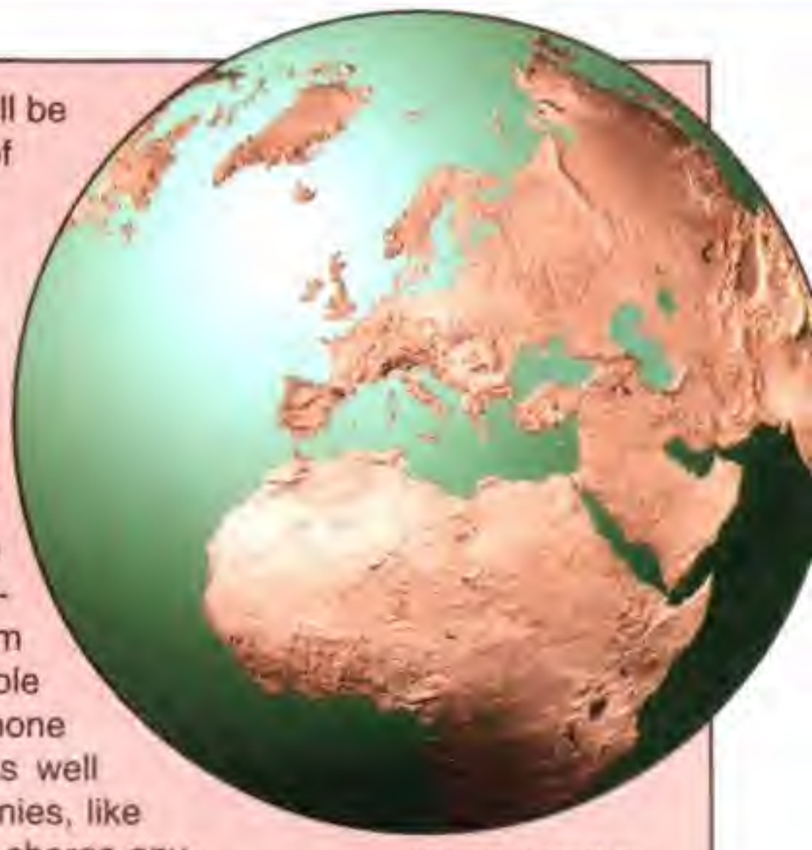
During in the next two years though, they plan to start integrating their Internet provision with their cable operation by offering direct digital high-capacity links to the Internet from any home connected to their cable telephone network.

This kind of direct digital cable link to the Internet will be a spoonful of veterinary strength tranquilliser in the tea of anyone struggling with a 28.8K modem on a standard analogue phone line, and impatiently waiting minutes for a World Wide Web page to load. A dedicated digital home cable link could offer 10 Megabits per second direct Ethernet access to the Internet, a two-hundred fold increase in speed over today's fastest modems. This opens up a plethora of possible new Internet uses, like video-telephony, video-on-demand, and even shared virtual reality environments.

In some areas cable operators already provide high-speed digital Ethernet links to businesses, hospitals, local government, and universities. In particular Videotron, who run the cable franchises in much of London, have extended the UK Internet backbone, SuperJANET, to Hammersmith Hospital, Imperial College, and Queen Charlotte's Hospital via a 100 Megabit/second fibre-optic link. They also provide private fibre-optic computer networks of up to 2 Megabits/second for organisations such as Southwark and Greenwich councils, the Riverside Health Authority, and the Hampshire Police Authority. On the consumer-level, digital Internet links are a different technical and economic proposition. Cable On-line may well be the first to provide this kind of link at a reasonable, consumer level prices.

Cheaper Dial-up

Even before then people who use the Internet frequently can often benefit from a cable connection. Most cable operators now provide telephone connection to subscribers as well as TV. Several cable companies, like Videotron for instance, don't charge anything for local calls between subscribers. So if you can find an Internet provider with a point of presence connected to your local cable telephone network, you can in theory get free, unlimited dial-up Internet access (once you've paid your fee).



Internet connection around the world will get better and cheaper.

In practice, for the present at least, most Internet providers would rather not give you the incentive to use up their valuable modem lines and server processing power all the time, if they don't stand to profit. Even CableTel, who normally offer subscribers local calls for a fixed charge of one and a half pence, won't be giving access to the Internet for this rate; they plan to charge a small premium for calls to the their Cable On-line Internet servers. Even so, such calls are still significantly cheaper than standard BT. line calls.

The ideal of free Internet access for all is still some years off, but with direct high-capacity cable access of the kind Cable On-line are currently testing, the price per kilobyte of data transferred, at least, looks set to fall drastically.

For more information, call Cable On-line on 0800 506506 or see their Web page at http://www.cableol.net

Videoway Interactive Television

The only cable operator in Britain currently offering all its subscribers an interactive TV channel is Videotron with its Videoway system, originally developed by their Canadian company. Technically, the level of interactivity is limited, but in the past few years their interactive programme designers have invented some ingenious applications.

Essentially the Videoway unit is a very basic computer, more like a beefed-up calculator really. It can run very simple games. Doom they aren't, which you can play using the remote control. Card games, for instance, or a very slow version of Pacman.

Most Amiga users won't be very impressed by the games on Videoway, but the average household is reported to spend five hours a week playing them.

The key aspect of Videoway, though, is that small amounts of software can be sent along with the programmes on the Videoway channel and downloaded into the Videoway unit. This means that at certain points in an otherwise normal programme, you can be offered an onscreen multiple choice of options, and the Videoway unit can remember and act on your response.

On the Videoway channel Videotron broadcast four distinct channels. The most basic application of Videoway is simply to allow you to change between channels at certain times in the programme. So you have disco dancing programmes, with guest dancers, and during a song you can choose between four camera angles of the dancer, for instance. Or with a football match broadcast on Videoway you can choose between three different camera angles, and one channel devoted to background information about the players. Videotron also plan to extend this capability to a live music venue with four cameras.

Interact.... patiently.

Slightly more sophisticated are multiple choice quiz programmes which let you choose the answer. The unit can register if your choice is right, and if so shows you the channel which has the host congratulating you, otherwise you get consolation and are told the right answer. It can also remember your score and by the end of the programme show you the appropriate channel which awards you with praise if you have done well, or criticises your performance if you haven't.

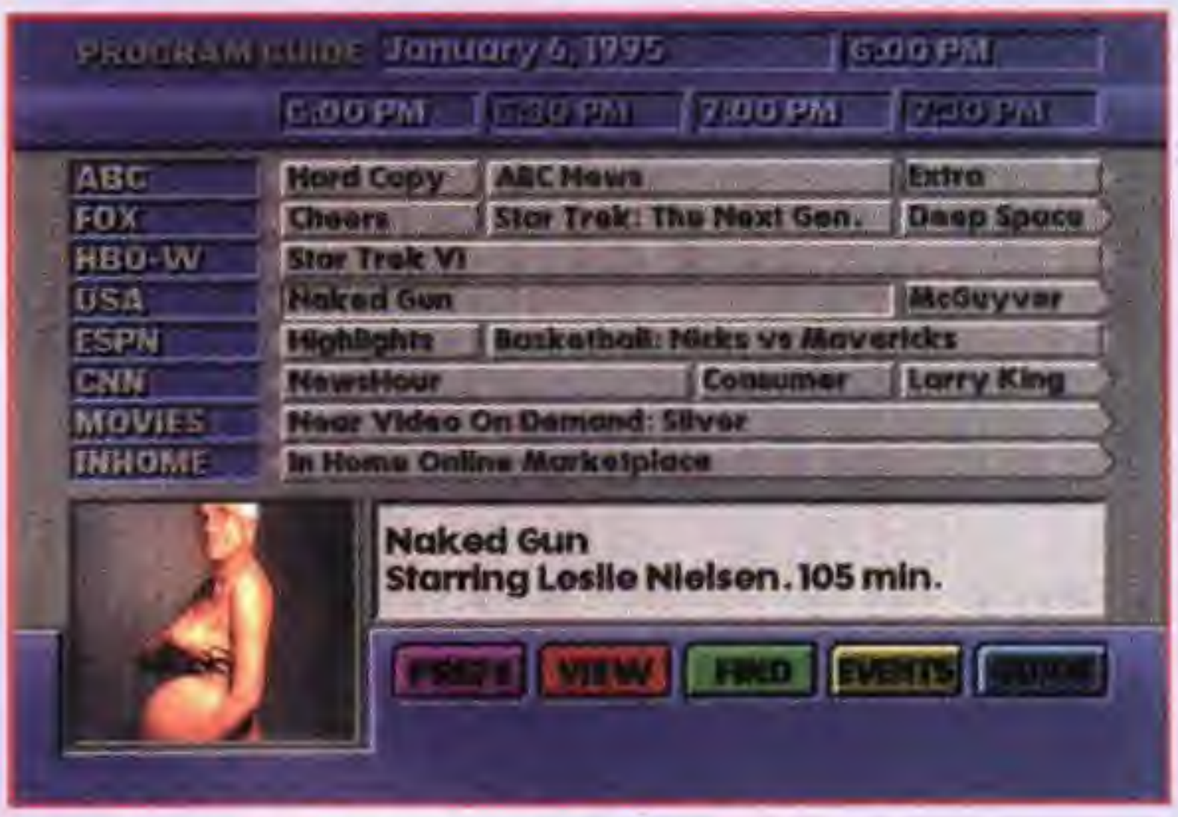
A neat and unexpectedly addictive variation of this is interactive roulette, which lets you pick one of four stakes at each spin, and calculates your winnings as you go along. You can only see the channel relevant to your choice of bet, and at the end you are shown one of four channels, depending on whether you are won a lot, a little, or have lost imaginary on-screen dollars. Though you are really only choosing between four channels, while the Videoway unit keeps track of a score, the illusion of interactivity is surprisingly effective.

A videoway unit.

Interactive TV and the Amiga

The Amiga has always been the outstanding machine for creating high-quality multimedia applications easily and cheaply. Even the humble, sub-£100 multimedia Amiga authoring systems, such as Helm and early versions of CanDo, always whitewashed expensive, slow, and complicated PC-compatible and Apple Mac rivals like Macromind Director or Authorware Professional. Despite now being sold as a 'multimedia' machine, there is still no multimedia authoring package on the PC to touch a premiere Amiga package like Scala. This is one reason why Scala, after eight years of developing authoring packages for the Amiga, are now porting their software to the PC. Even then it will not have the same capabilities.

In tandem with booming demand for PC-based multimedia in the last two years, though, has come a boom in home video production. As it is so inexpensive, good-looking, and simple-to-use, Scala has always seemed natural for Amiga users to use for video production, the creation of titles, sub-titles, fades, wipes, and interactive multimedia applications.



Video on Demand, or near Video on Demand - in the pipeline.

Now these two strands of technological development, the affordable multimedia computer and the affordable video production suite are coming together. And one of the places it is happening first is in cable TV studios. Cable TV companies often want to present local community information in a multimedia format and create graphics, titles and wipes for their programmes, as cheaply as possible. With Scala and an Amiga this has become possible. This combination is the single most popular multimedia information delivery and video production package amongst cable TV stations in the UK. It is also used by over 100 cable stations worldwide.

Now Scala, and others, are looking to take this development a step further by making all the multimedia information available via cable and satellite interactive. So by sitting at home in front of a TV with the remote control, users can bring up exactly the information they want. It follows that they will also be able to bring up particular programmes, films, or music tracks that they want, too. This is iTV - interactive TV, a fusion of computer and television.

The device, or 'set-top box' as it's universally called, which will provide interactive TV is to be a kind of hybrid computer. It will run interactive multimedia software, but will be less expensive than a full-blown multimedia PC, so that a mass market can afford it.

Scala are currently doing their best to ensure that the set-top box of the near future will be running Scala software. Barry Thurston, Managing Director at Scala UK, told ***AUI*** about Scala's involvement in state-of-the-art interactive TV.

One of the first things Thurston made clear was that when it comes to interactive TV, nobody really knows what is going to happen. There are two main problems. One is that none of the broadcasters really knows what people at home want out of interactive TV, if anything. And the other is that even if they decide to go ahead and deliver interactive TV, the gap between what they will probably want to deliver and what current technology can feasibly and economically do is enormous. Scala are obviously committed to interactive TV, but as far as real customers and the bottom line is concerned, it's a leap into the void.

So the development of Interactive TV is obviously risky, but it is also potentially very lucrative and Scala have managed to persuade some very heavyweight partners to join them. These include General Instruments, the American company who manufacture 65% of all cable set-top boxes, and 90% of satellite boxes, in the US at the moment. G.I. are also world leaders in digital compression hardware, of the type used to encipher and decipher the digital satellite, terrestrial, and cable TV broadcasts now being introduced around the world.

They have been working together for the last year or so on a cheap set-top box which will run Scala software. Price-wise, the crucial component of set-top boxes is RAM chips, and one of the biggest attractions of Scala's software is that it can run with less than one megabyte of RAM.

Thurston recounted with wry glee the scene at a trial of interactive TV systems carried out recently amongst American broadcasters, involving a Scala-based set-top box versus a Microsoft system. Microsoft were aiming to wipe out the competition with an interactive TV system that could run modularly under Windows, supposedly a snip at only twice the price of Scala's set-top box. "Now then, how many of these Microsoft systems will you gentlemen be taking? (slightly awkward pause).. er.. None, thanks". Of course, the Scala-based system was more attractive, because price and quality are crucial in the race for an affordable interactive TV technology. With an attractive, professional looking, elegant system like the Scala-G.I. set-top box on offer, most people are not going to want to pay twice what is already a considerable amount of money for a Windows-based alternative, whoever the president of the company is. Even if the Scala software was originally developed on a long-lost freak cousin of the 'normal' computer.

Scala is used by over 100 cable channels worldwide for presentation.

The Scala-G.I. consortium have already settled a deal with PrimeStar, one of America's big satellite broadcasters. PrimeStar are one of the first broadcasters in America to adopt digital broadcasting. Because of the huge number of channels they can broadcast using digital compression - over 150 - the programme guides they broadcast contain massive amounts of information. A multimedia system like Scala provides an interactive, graphical way of presenting and organising this information, so viewers can find out about what programmes they want easily. PrimeStar broadcast all the latest channel information digitally in

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Above: In the future, with interactive TV people will be able to play games over cable networks. Below: Scala multimedia can help sort through the masses of channels available with digital compression.

the form of structured multimedia files which can be browsed using Scala software. The set-top boxes, which are effectively pared-down home computers, have the necessary Scala software already stored in memory, and can simply load in the latest digital multimedia file as it is broadcast. Viewers can then just point and click their way through the channel information as they would with any interactive multimedia application, like multimedia CD-ROMs for instance. The channel guide can feature pictures from programmes, reviews, background stories etc. A bit like an interactive Radio Times.

Channel guides are one useful application of Scala multimedia software in set-boxes, but the same technology could in theory be used to broadcast files of any interactive multimedia information. Any material currently available on interactive CD-ROMs could soon be accessible via interactive set-top boxes. So educational and entertainment applications for instance, could also be broadcast via cable or satellite, if there was a demand among viewers. But just how much multimedia information people will want delivered to their homes and what kind is still unknown.

An ex-CBM staffer, Barry Thurston is still very supportive of the Amiga community despite Scala having branched out from their Amiga roots. One unique feature of Scala's new 'backbone' system is its inter-compatibility – any application written in 'backbone' format for one platform should work on any other platform running the same Scala software.

Scala is proven, easy-to-use multimedia authoring software.

This means that in the future, if set-top boxes running Scala take off, Amiga users could design multimedia information at home using Scala on their Amigas, and then send it directly to cable or satellite companies for broadcast on their systems.

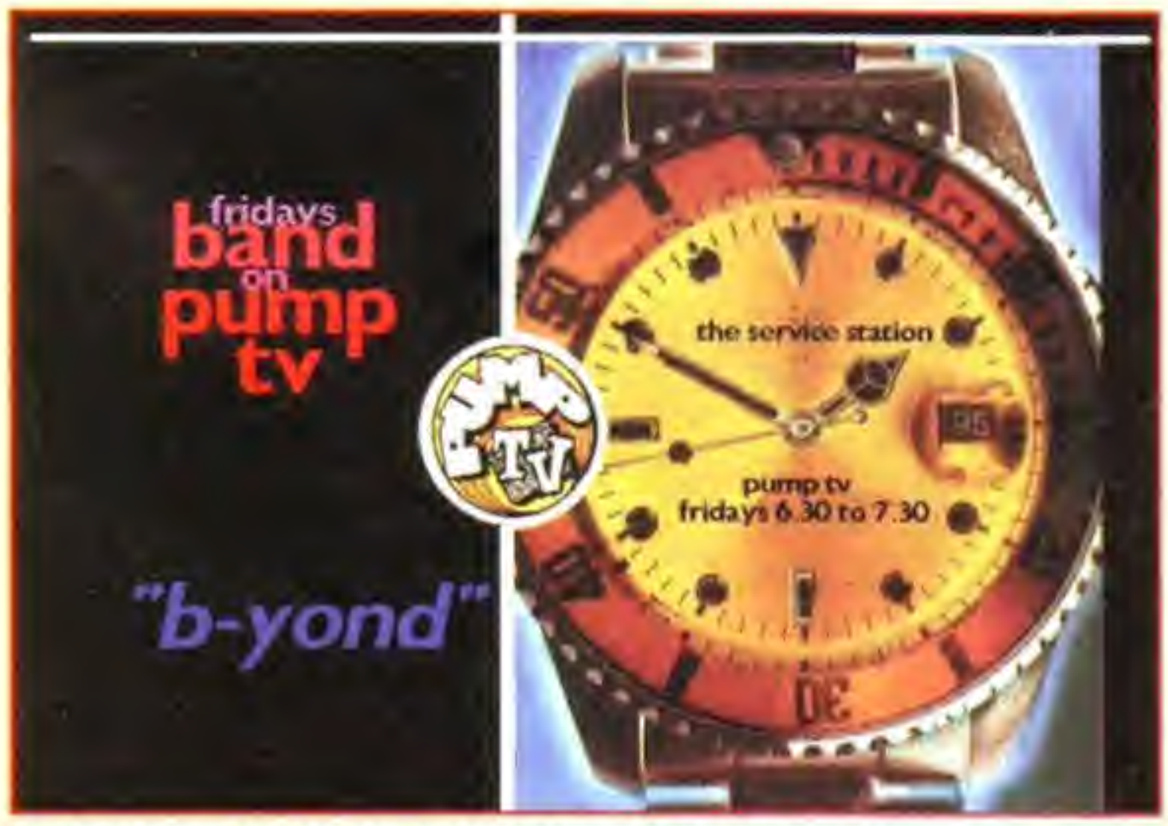
For more information contact: Scala 01920 444294

From clothes shop window to cable corporation: One man and his Amiga

Cable TV is one area where the Amiga has had the chance to stretch its multimedia muscles and achieve some sound commercial success. Running the world-leading Scala multimedia software, the Amiga is now the single most successful computer system for delivering multimedia information on British Cable TV. At least six of the UK's seventeen big cable operators use Scala with Amigas for their local channel daily programming, plus many independent cable channels.

Most cable TV companies are trying to get professional-looking, eye-catching, and innovative video graphics and multimedia, easily and quickly done on a shoestring budget; the kind of market the Amiga was made for. Its success on cable is creating opportunities for growing numbers of Amiga users to make a living from their skills. And their imagination and creativity have in turn boosted the reputation of the Amiga amongst budding Cable TV channels.

The career to date of Roifield Brown is typical of the pioneering success of the Amiga in Cable TV. In the last three years he has worked



The Amiga comes into its own producing this type of high-quality graphics.

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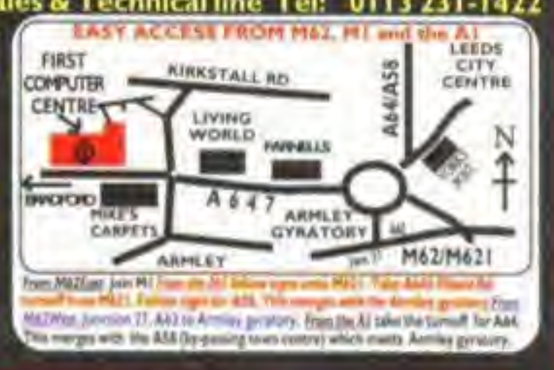

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Disk Drives

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Zip Drive
- Includes:- £189.99
- HISOFT Zip Tools
- 1 X 100Mb cartridge
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- Additional 100Mb Zip cartridges £11.99

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External Drive Only £84.99
The Ultimate Amiga Drive

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New Mega Mouse+ 400 dpi (3 button)	£12.99
Mega Mouse 400 dpi (2 button)	£11.49
Essential Mouse 400 dpi (2 button)	£10.99
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New!! Soccer Mouse 400dpi	£19.49
AlfaData Crystal Trackball	£34.99
ZyFi-2 Speakers (8 watts/channel)	£26.99
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Amiga Modulator	£34.99
Amiga PSU	£34.99
Roboshift (Auto mouse/j.stick switch)	£9.99
Kickstart 2.04	£24.99
Kickstart 2.05 (for use in A600)	£24.99
CIA 8520A I/O controller	£18.99
68882 Co Pro 25mhz PLCC	£34.99
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Turbotech realtime clock cartridge £17.99 fits any Amiga

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SupraFAXModem 288
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This modem has full 14400 baud, includes V.22bis, V.32, V.32bis, V.32, V.21, MNP2-5, V.42, V42bis, Class 1 & 2 commands, 9600/14400 Group 3 Fax. Includes free modem comms/mini Fax pack & cable.
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Supra modems are not BABT approved, however they perform as well & often outperform BABT approved modems. Supra Modems have a 5 year limited warranty

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V34, 28,800 BPS, BABT approved
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Dual Standard
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The amazing new graphics tablet for the Amiga developed with Five Computer. 94% rated in Amiga Shopper. Requires 2.04 WB or above.

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24 bit colour scanner, 16.7 million colours

Alpha Scan 800 £99.99
800 dpi 256 grayscale, works on all Amigas

Alpha Scan 256 £139.99
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Epson GT 5000 £439.99
Colour flatbed scanner Parallel interface built in. 4in Dimensions scanning software, price £399.99

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New!! Aminet collection 2 (Aminet 5-8)	£24.49
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New!! World Of Pinups 2	£14.99
WPD Hottest 5	£17.99
Weird Science Fonts	£8.99
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Weird Science Animation	£16.99
New!! World Info 95	£34.99
New!! Zoom	£18.99

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Portable mono printer, 30 page ASF built in.	
Canon BJC70Colour	£289.99
Portable colour printer, 30 page ASF	
Canon BJ200ex	£207.99
High quality mono printer, virtual 720 dpi.	
Canon BJC4000Colour	£289.99
High quality colourfast mono printing 360 dpi.	
Canon BJC600e Colour	£412.99
Enhanced colour printer, virtual 720 dpi.	
Canon LPB460 Laser	£369.99
GDI printer, 4 p/p/m, HP Laserjet II emulation.	

Star

Star LC90 9 pin mono	£107.99
ASF built in, push tractor optional.	
Star LC100 9 pin Colour	£129.99
180 cps draft, 45 cps NLQ, Amiga drivers.	
Star LC240 24 pin mono	£123.99
192 cps draft, with ASF built in.	
Star LC240C 24 pin Colour	£145.99
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Star SJ144 Colour	£229.99
Colour thermal transfer printer, low running costs, 3 p/p/m mono, 1.4 p/p/m colour.	

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All Citizen printers have a 2 year warranty

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Simple (as easy as ABC) to use 24 pin printer. Comes as standard with 50 sheet Auto sheet feeder. Tractor feed optional at £16.99	

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6 p/p/m 600 dpi	

EPSON

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720 dpi, 4ppm Black, 2ppm Colour	
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720dpi, 2.5ppm Black, 1ppm Colour	
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720 dpi, 2.5ppm Black, Colour Upgradeable.	
New!! Stylus Pro	£499.99
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4 ppm, 300 dpi, 1Mb memory, 150 sheet ASF	

The perfect accompaniment for a high quality colour printer
NEW! GTX-5000 Colour Multimedia printer
ONLY!! £439.99

We would be happy to quote you on any make or model of printer that may not be listed.

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Citizen Swift/ABC colour	£12.99
Star LC90 mono ribbon	£4.99
Star LC10/100 mono	£3.69
Star LC10/100 colour	£7.99
Star LC240c colour	£12.99
Star LC240c mono	£8.99
Star LC240 mono	£5.99
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Printer repair specialists call for quote

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Canon BJC 4000 colour (single)	£16.99
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HP. Deskjet double mono	£24.99
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Epson Stylus Col. II/S/820 Colour	£24.99
Epson Stylus 820 colour upgrade	£14.99
Star SJ144 mono/colour (single)	£8.99

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All printer dust covers	£5.99

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Fanfold (tractor feed) 2000 sheets		£17.99
Single sheet	500 sheets	£4.99
Single sheet	1000 sheets	£8.99
Single sheet	2000 sheets	£17.99
Epson Stylus 720 dpi paper pack		£12.49

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50 x £15.99	500 x £118.99
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30 x £12.99	200 x £63.99
50 x £25.99	500 x £142.99
Bulk DSHD	
10 x £3.99	100 x £33.99
30 x £11.99	200 x £59.99
50 x £17.99	500 x £134.99
Branded DSHD	
10 x £5.99	100 x £47.99
30 x £15.99	200 x £84.99
50 x £25.99	500 x £190.99

Disk labels x500 £6.99
Disk labels x1000 £9.99

Big changes are happening with new developments in interactive channels.

freelance for several of the major Cable TV companies, including the Cable Corporation and Cable London, as well as several cable channels such as the Black Entertainment Television channel. He is now in the process of setting up his own company, 'Handprint', to create Amiga-generated video graphics and multimedia, mainly for cable TV companies. He is also training users in Scala and DeluxePaint. He told ***AUI*** how he has managed single-handedly to carve a career in Cable TV, using nothing but Amigas.

Brown, now 26, first used Amigas in the late eighties when studying video graphics for an Audio-Visual HND at Batley Art School in the Midlands. He has never found any reason to use any other kind of computer since. After finishing art school he then ventured into the clothes retail business, with shops in Birmingham and Manchester, and it was there that he first began turning his Amiga hobby into a business. By creating a basic multimedia sequence on his Amiga using the Scala IC500 program and DeluxePaint, and putting the monitor in his shop window, he had a home-made, eye-catching advert he could leave running all night long. Soon he was getting more interested in programming the adverts on the Amiga than he was in the clothes business. He found himself in demand for multimedia odd-jobs like designing projections for the now famous 'Luvdup' DJs at a local nightclub. Then cable channel Identity, now Black Entertainment TV, asked him to do an 'ident' channel logo for them.

After building up his experience with Scala and the Amiga, he eventually managed to get a regular job working for the Berkshire-based Cable Corporation designing and producing the content of their 'Service Station' channel. This provides multimedia local community information 23 hours a day, as well as their engineering information channel, which provides up-to-date news of any engineering problems. For both these channels he uses two Amiga 4000/030s running Scala, DeluxePaint, and Art Department Professional. A Vidi-Amiga 12 is used for digitising, and he also uses an A1200 to separately create the adverts for the channels.

He has also designed the multimedia information content for the Camden-based cable company, Cable London, on his Amiga and is now working for Birmingham LIVE, a branch of the new LIVE TV cable channel based in Canary Wharf. The one from which Janet Street-Porter recently departed.

So which tips would Brown give to any Amiga users aspiring to find work in the growing Cable TV industry using the Amiga?

"Just approach cable companies and sell yourself. Look for not so obvious opportunities as well. For instance, lots of cable companies use Scala on the Amiga because it's such a flexible and affordable system. And they all end up using only about ten of the fifty or so backgrounds that come with the Scala package. Especially the grassy one and the water one. So some of them would probably welcome new backgrounds. And try other outlets which could use multimedia displays like art galleries, restaurants, boring places like that, and just sell them the concept of multimedia."

The blossoming British cable industry offers some of the best opportunities in years for Amiga users to use their machines professionally. Cable is puncturing the old exclusive, big company, glamorous image of TV broadcasting and bringing it down to earth, within reach of enthusiastic amateurs. And these people are generally open-minded enough to use Amigas.

For more information contact: Roifield Brown, HANDPRINT - 01973 371709

The Future

For the moment, future demand for more information services seems to be practically infinite. In the next three or four years technological advances in digital communications and fibre-optic networks seem set to fulfil some of this century's futurists' dreams.

In particular, Britain's budding local cable channels show every sign of becoming a new, low-budget, but lively cultural force.

However, many people are beginning to reject the vision of an information society in which everyone experiences life, and each other, via a cathode ray tube. If it's true that "information is alienated experience" as Jaron Lanier, virtual reality pioneer and designer of the virtual reality data glove has said, there might soon come a point at which people become fed up with just absorbing electronic information from a screen and begin to look for other kinds of experience instead.

The economic momentum of the information technology revolution is so great at the moment that the future of cable seems assured for the next few years at least. In that time, changes in telecommunications, the structure of the economy, and the nature of work may well radically change people's pattern of life and their viewing habits. In the meantime cable is spreading its tentacles under the land with yet unpredictable results.

TechnoWorld

Once again, the indefatigable Martin Witton leads the intrepid *AUI* team of investigative technofreaks out to face the innovative future that is moving in on us right now.

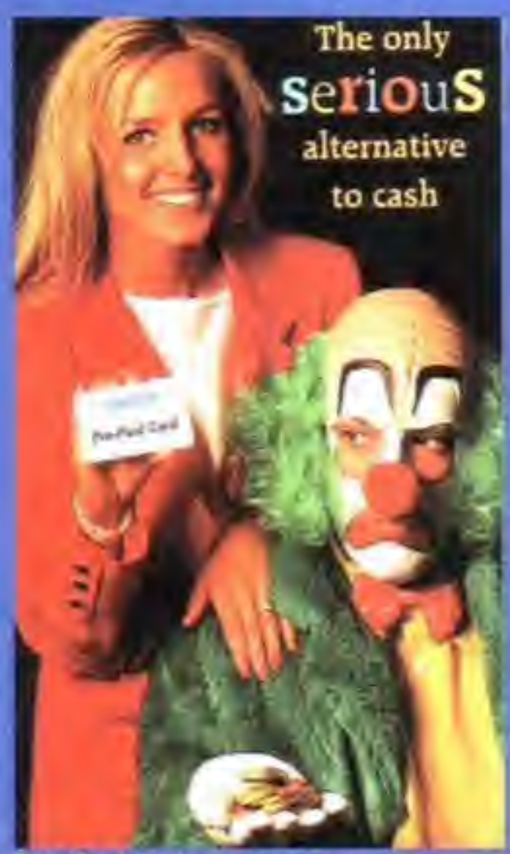
Techno-bytes... *AUI* rounds up the latest in techno developments. Can you live without them?

Pre-Paid Cards

AUI in a recent issue covered the experiment being carried out in Swindon, where money had been replaced by smart cards. Casio have now introduced a pre-paid card system on the same basis as an alternative to cash, but in this case the cards are not restricted to any particular area.

The Pre-paid card system from Casio means customers pre-pay an amount of money and this is registered onto a card enabling them to use that card to pay for goods and services at a specific lovcation, say at a tennis club. Once the card is credited with funds, it can be read at point of sale, in the bar or any other place in the club and the amount deducted from the total on the card.

Prepaid cards can be used, for example at such places as at sports clubs, social clubs, squash or golf clubs, works canteens and schools and Casio are working hard to perswuade such organisations to take them on. The obvious benefits to the clubs and their members are in security as the risk of theft of cash from both customers and tills is reduced.



Safe Cash in the locker room.

For clubs and organisations involved in the cards the benefits are in faster transactions and customer loyalty. And, of course, plenty of times cards are paid for and then lost or not used up completely as happens with stamps or, phone cards or even travellers cheques. The clubs get the benefit of such unused amounts.

Casio have bonus schemes for users and companies through points systems, prizes and discounts.

INFO

Contact:
Casio Electronics Company Ltd.,
Unit 6, 1000 North Circular Road,
London NW2 2YP.

Say Me, Say You

For people who have sudden ideas or remember something important at inopportune moments, the Voice Organiser, from Apple Technologies - not the computer company - could be a useful little gadget. The voice activated Organiser replaces the need for scribbled notes which have a habit of getting lost and could also take the place of a secretary!(And it's lighter on your knee.)

But this neat litle device is more than just a dictaphone. As a diary, it will tell you all the events for the day which you have given it at different times. As a voice activated telephone directory, it will store 400 telephone numbers and save you having to scroll through an electronic or manual directory.

For example say "Kate Walters" (You do know Kate, don't you?

TechnoWorld

CONTINUED

Everybody knows Kate!) and it will display her home, work, mobile, fax numbers and sexual preferences - well, not the last unless that's information that you have given it..And as a voice activated notepad you can tell it, in confidence, those amazing ideas as you get them and play them back later.

As soon as you have trained the

Speak to it of love - or anything else.

pocket sized Voice Organiser to recognise your voice you can dispense with a whole pocket full of diaries, notebooks and tape machines. It will work for up to a year ahead and is multi-lingual. (No, it won't talk back to you in Spanish - unless that ees what you speak to it, Amigo.)

INFO

Price £149.99
Contact:
Apple Technologies Ltd.,
16 Willan Trading Estate,
55 Waverley Road, Sale,
Cheshire. M33 7Ay.

In Car Computer

For people who have problems with map reading in cars such as travel sickness or simply can't read maps, Philips Routefinder is a useful electronic alternative. This portable computer can plan any road journeys in the British Isles. By entering your starting point and destination, you can follow the step by step instructions on the screen.

You can specify routes such as avoiding motorways or particular places along the way. If you encounter traffic jams or roadworks, the Routefinder will instantly give new directions from that point.

By entering data about your car and driving habits, the 16bit 8MHz processor will estimate your time of arrival, cost of trip and fuel consumption. Interestingly, it is being brought out under the aegis of the Science Museum no less. Quite a recommendation.

INFO

Price £199.00
Contact:
The Science Museum Catalogue,
Euroway Business Park,
Swindon. SN5 8SN.

Multimedia Speakers

Goodmans claim to have designed speakers specifically for use with multimedia computers and keyboards with sound facilities. However, the speakers can also be used to broadcast sound from personal cassette and CD players, radios and TVs.

Speakers designed for multimedia.

The speakers have magnetic shielding to protect sensitive computer equipment from distortion or damage. The 2-channel stereo amplifier and 20 Watt power output multimedia speakers are priced £39.95 per pair.

From most electrical retailers such as Comet.

alt.culture

Having trouble keeping up with the jargon and latest on-line developments? alt.culture - the book, takes you through cyberpunk, Internet, new age, media viruses, toucheads, TinySex, binocular dysphoria and the like. With 900 entries including Internet addresses, alt. culture is an A-Z of the 90s underground and online dimension.

INFO

alt.culture is by Steven Daly and Nathaniel Wice, published by 4th Estate and available in bookshops.
Price £12.99
or contact JEM Marketing,
Little Mead, Cranleigh,
Surrey GU6 8ND.

Prize Winning Innovation

First prize at the Great British Innovations and Inventors Fair this year has gone to Telerecorder 701. The 701 enables you automatically to record all your phone calls without additional wiring, adaptors or phone sockets.

To install it, you simply place the Watsonlinc connector around the telephone cable at any convenient point along its length. No physical contact is made with the cable but the stethoscope is claimed to pick up every word of the conversation and relay it into the tape recorder.

Recording is voice activated with auto start/stop. It is transferrable to any phone and also has an ear piece for live call monitoring. The Telerecorder is battery or mains operated.

INFO

Price £149.00
Contact:
Innovations Information Line.
Tel: 01793 513946

On the way to Kensington? The Science Museum advises you to avoid the M25 today.

More Powerful Laser

Scientists at the University of St. Andrews have developed a miniture laser small enough to fit in a matchbox. The researchers say that the laser will be useful for sorting cells in biomediacal research and photographic reproduction.

The power source of the system is a beam-creating diode laser similar to those used in CD players. This powers another laser, which creates an infra-red beam. This is then reflected within a transparent crystal, where it is converted into green light. (Have you got that or do you want to read it again?) The minature laser produces 130 milliwatts of green light which is 100 times more powerful than that of conventional red laser pointers.

Electronic Photography

Japanese electronics company, Ricoh has produced a pocket sized digital camera that captures an image with 410,000 pixels of resolution. This is comparable to Super VHS video. The DC-1 measures 135mm by 22mm by 76mm and weighs only 255g. Price £1,100.

Casio Computer are also developing small digital cameras for about half that price, although weighing less the Casio offering offers only 250,000 pixels of resolution. There are at least 10 companies competing in the digital camera market, such as Kodak, Nikon and Canon and these cameras are beginning to come in a wide range of prices and abilities.

Digital camera technology, which like VHS video is replacing conventional film, has vastly improved the images which can be manipulated and are easily

SCANNER

NEW!!!
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£399.00
COMPLETE WITH CARD CABLE AND SOFTWARE TO ENABLE YOU TO ALSO CONNECT TO A PC OR MACINTOSH COMPUTER

FOR AMIGA 1500 TO 4000 COMPUTERS WITH SCSI CONTROLLER (A1200 USER PLEASE PHONE).

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DOUBLE SPEED	£159.00
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400 DPI 3 BUTTON FOR ALL AMIGA COMPUTERS
£10

OKTAGON 4008 SCSI CARD

True SCSI II controller for your Amiga 1500 to 4000, upgradeable to 8MB using Zipp Ram allows you to connect H-Disk, Syquest CD Roms etc. **£99.00**

MULTIFACE III ADDS 2 SERIAL & 1 PARALLEL PORT TO ANY AMIGA 1500 TO 4000 £79.00

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IDE controller card for your Amiga 1500 to 4000 allows you to connect a CD rom of your choice or just another Hard Drive.

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AMIGA A4000T 040 £2150

AMIGA A4000T 060 £2450

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PCMCIA compatible (With Clock & FPU socket)

0MB	£49.00
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	30 Pin	64 Pin	72 Pin
1MB	£25	£N/A	£35
2MB	£89	£N/A	£69
4MB	£109	£199	£109
8MB	£239	£N/A	£239
16MB	£389	£N/A	£389
32MB	£N/A	£N/A	£699

FOR ANY AMIGA OR ACCELERATOR CARD

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Increases the performance of your machine when adding these FPU's. suitable for all Accelerator & Ram cards for A1200 and Amiga 4000 Computers

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TechnoWorld

CONTINUED

transmitted over conventional phone lines around the world. Some makes, such as the Ricoh DC-1, can even transmit its images over telephone lines to remote computers.

Multimedia systems and networks that combine many of different kinds of graphical and audio data can handle information only in digital form. For a wide variety of sophisticated devices to share data and work together as a system, common standards will be necessary and they aren't yet agreed. However, most digital camera developments have taken place in the last year and still have some way to go before the rolls of film become obsolete. But it will happen, it will happen, you can believe us. Does ***AUI*** ever get it wrong?

Boarding the Green Bandwagon

Japan's NEC has taken on board environmental issues and has developed a technique that increases the proportion of recyclable material on printed circuit boards. The new machinery NEC have developed raises the content of recyclable material by 50% and enables solder, glass fibre and epoxy resins to be extracted, in addition to the gold and copper that is already generally reused.

The circuit board is heated using infra-red radiation and the components dismantled. It is then pulverised and separated into copper-rich powder and a glass fibre resin powder. The process is expected to be operational within three years.

Touch Technology

The famed Massachusettes Institute of Technology (MIT) has been looking into futuristic high technology living spaces in a project called The Living Room of the Future.

According to Michael Hawley, the professor in charge of the project, it will be the first to integrate everyday appliances from a variety of manufacturers into a central household brain. Hawley hopes to accomplish this without cabling, with wireless technology.

The goals of the project are to increase the safety, comfort and convenience of everyday living. It involves a wide variety of new technologies including multimedia and voice command. Hawley is aiming to run the living space project at the sound of a specific word or gesture. Microwaves ovens will be activated, computers and televisions will turn off and on at the lift of a hand and door handles will recognise the owners touch.

The key to this futuristic way of living will be through a centralised camera which Hawley hopes will one day recognise individuals as they walk through the room.

Even more advanced is the computerised medical monitor that would relay your body temperature and stress levels to the house computer. "For instance if you come in from a jog and you're heated up, the air conditioning would drop lower, and if your stress levels are rising, the room might dim the lights slowly and soften the music" said Hawley.

But doesn't that beg the question, "What happens if there are several people - or only two - and they have different tastes in heat (or only one of them has no clothes on!)?" How does the house know which temeperature to go for? Sound like not so much a recipe for an effeortless future but a house with a nervous breakdown.

SPEA's 64 Bit Accelerator

The PC continues to advance as a tool for graphics and multimedia production. SPEA now have a V7-Mirage Video TV which they say combines a 64-bit graphics accelerator with a TV tuner, allowing live video input to be monitored in a scalable window while the user works in other applications.

The Mirage Video TV supports video scaling and MPEG-1 hardware playback and is intended for both home and multimedia applications. It allows a PC to be upgraded to multimedia MPC3 specifications for VideoCD playback, interactive video games, multimedia presentations, interactive educational systems and multimedia information and sales terminals.

(Why isn't the Amiga doing all this? It could if Amiga Technologies got its skates on!)

The V7 is equipped with the S3 Trio64V+ graphics and video processor and has 2MB EDO DRAM. It offers resolutions up to 1280 x 1024 at 85Hz, or TrueColor up to 800 x 600 resolution at 75Hz along with scaling of digital video such as MPEG or Video for Windows.

External video sources like video recorders can be connected via a live video input at resolutions from 16 x 16 up to 1024 x 768, full screen or in a window, at 25 frames per second UK PAL format, or 30fps NTSC. The PAL TV tuner allows aerial or cable TV connection, with Videotext on frequencies from 48.25 - 855.25 MHz.

The Mirage Video TV is also available without the TV tuner as the Mirage Video, for those who just want 64 bit graphics, video scaling and an option on the MPEG decoder. (And don't we all?) SPEA's realtime video digitizer CRUNCH IT, can be connected directly to the Mirage Video cards using the SPEA Movie-Bus for producing digital and MPEG-1 videos.

The PCI bus Mirage Video TV costs £260.00 and the Mirage Video £190.00. The MPEG decoder costs £ 100.00 extra.

INFO

Contact:
SPEA Software,
Tel: 01844 261886.

Fire Monitor

Firefly, an aptly named Swedish company has developed a device to combat industrial fires or explosions triggered by hot particles or sparks often caused by friction on production lines.

The device uses an infra-red monitor to measure the radiation from a glowing particle. within a couple of milliseconds it can trigger a fire extinguisher or can divert the flow of material on the production line.

The monitor is sensitive enough to adjust the nature and intensity of the fire-extinguishing agent, acc-0ording to the temperature of the particle.

INFO

Contact:
Firefly Sweden
Tel: 86462565

Don't Call Us

The TechnoWorld is not always a comfortable one. It can turn out to be inconvenient for the oddest of reasons when some technological device goes even slightly amiss. How about a computerised phantom caller?

A not very happy American woman from Massachusetts recently was infuriated to find her telephone ringing every ninety minutes day and night. This went on for six months and nearly drove her bananas.

The calls were all the same. The telephone rang but when answered there was no sound, not even heavy breathing. Finally, out of patience with this persecution, she got the police onto it. They brought in the local phone company who traced the calls to an abandoned oil tank. Yes, it was abandoned and, though this is not a ghost story, no-one was making the calls.

No-one but the tank itself. The tank contained a computer and had been programmed to alert the oil company when the level of oil fell below a certain point. What it was doing was, quite correctly, informing the oil company. The trouble was that the phone numbers had been mixed up and the lonely oil tank was pathetically, if infuriatingly, calling up, not its company but the poor woman every ninety minutes.

BT says that this kind of mistaken call is becoming increasingly common. In fact, the Editor of ***AUI's*** mother was driven to fury and the desperate resort of changing the telephone number she had had for over twenty years because she was getting the high beeping noise of a fax coming in day and night over her home voice phone line.

The problem, says BT, is that more and more people are using automated fax-back and phone services controlled by computer databases.

"If it's a fax, we would advise people to connect a fax machine to receive the fax and then contact the sender." And if it's an oil tank?

The Technoworld may be interesting, even fascinating but we can't expect it always to be a comfortable place, can we? ***AUI***

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The Notes section enables you to do freehand sketches, maps, plans, scribble notes, etc. Simply add or delete pages as required.

The Calculator has all the usual functions and scrolls calculations forwards or backwards for checking.

The Eraser can delete text or scribble.

The Pen Pad displays a "local time" 24 hour digital Clock.

World Time allows you to set five international clocks with time zones of your choice.

Search allows you to find any word or number in the address/phone book, Diary or To Do list.

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TRUE LIES AND NO VIDEOTAPE

Computer graphics and special effects are entering every area of presentation. Vision '95 is where TV and movie professionals discover how to do it and what to do it with. David Ward mixes in with the pros, finds a few Amigas, and meets Henry and Harry.

CD quality recording direct to hard disk is possible using – DAR's OMR8.

No article on computer graphics would be complete without a reference to Big Arnie, so here we go. In his film 'The Running Man', our hero was framed for mass murder by the manipulation of video images. His face was 'mapped' onto that of the bad guy, and his voice was synthesized to say what the bad guy said.

That film was made quite some time ago when computer special effects were still limited in what they could do. As the years have passed by, Mr. Schwartzenegger has appeared in films that have had more and more digital special effects. 'Terminator 2' was considered ground-breaking in its use of morphing, while his recent 'True Lies' was packed full of discrete digital effects.

The future won't be tapeless, but with less tape.

At Vision'95, the show for the TV and Film professional, you get to see the sort of equipment that is used to create these stunning visual images.

Leading the way, as usual, were Quantel. They've been in the business for twenty years, pioneering the move to digital computer editing with the launch of Harry in 1985.

Since then Henry and Hal have appeared on the scene, but now there are pretenders to the crown that Quantel have worn for so long. It is similar to the IBM story. Once they dominated world markets with their proprietary mainframe computers. Then along came 'open systems' like UNIX.

Quantel's equipment has been based on proprietary hardware, but the competitors are offering software solutions running on 'off-the-shelf' machines like Silicon Graphics' Onyx superworkstation.

These machines can composite images, move things around, and remove or distort objects within a scene. The operator works on one frame of the movie and the computer then duplicates the effects on the rest of the frames in that scene.

No longer can the camera be considered a truthful piece of equipment. With a computer special effects unit you can alter reality

Digital video will soon dominate the newsroom.

beyond belief. At the Show the Quantel operator was erasing parts of New York, causing skyscrapers to fall over, and darkening the already deep blue sky.

Kodak's Cineon System was being demonstrated. This outfit, running on Onyx, was used to create the town visible behind the castle for 'First Knight', and merge the train compartment to a filmed background in Warner Brother's 'First Kiss'. Thus making old-fashioned back-projection redundant.

The film's director, Lawrence Kasdan, also wanted richer colour, so Cineon was again used to enhance the Technicolor film. Today's films are not the only ones to benefit from this technique. Ingmar Bergman's 1953 "Ingen Mans Kvinna" was restored from faded obscurity to its original clarity, and had dust marks and scratches removed automatically from it too.

Mind you, Vision'95 is not all about special effects and image processing, a lot of the Show is given over to the less glamourous hardware used in the TV and Film industries.

Items such as the Pink DA. This is a "cost effective" video distributor and amplifier. It was noticeable eye mainly for its shocking day-glo pink paint job, rather than any other aesthetic or technical qualities it may have had. Much of today's video editing is done using digital 'off-line' editors. Rather than the assembling of individual scenes from several tapes onto a master tape, the digital editor compiles its images on hard disk. These are then output to the master in the correct order once the edit is complete.

The Altus Hard Disk VCR.

Early editors had banks of hard disks in large cabinets for this storage. As disk capacities have increased, and physical sizes decreased, it is now possible to have a hard disk recorder that works in a similar fashion to a VCR. And of a similar size too.

The Altus Digital Disc Recorder *(sic)* can be supplied with disk capacities from 2.1 up to 9.1Gb. The top end machine can handle 45 minutes of broadcast quality sound and video, or nearly two hours of domestic VHS quality, for about £13k. It does this via user selectable Motion-JPEG compression.

A Camcutter gives you 20 minutes of digital video from its 2.4Gb hard drive.

With disk prices dropping daily, and decreasing prices for silicon chips, the domestic hard disk VCR may one day be a possibility. It may also happen to the camcorder. The $19,000 Avid/Ikegami CamCutter is designed for professional news gathering. Yet 20 minutes of recording time is hardly enough, even though the removable 2.4Gb £1700 disk pack can be used over and over again, say industry pundits.

Ampex venture into the computer consumable market with a variety of back-up products.

Tape could be the only viable alternative for digital recording in the foreseeable future. Sony have shown Digital Betacam and Betacam SX, while Panasonic have their DVC-PRO. Both still in their early stages of development. These systems all rely on MPEG compression in order to get the huge amounts of data, that video and audio streams generate, onto magnetic tape. And, as you would expect, the leading tape manufacturers, or their agents, were at Vision'95 demonstrating their wares. Ampex, a name that's long been associated with video tape in the professional market, are now expanding into computer products. The first to make their appearance are: a recordable CD, and a DAT tape back-up cartridge. An Exabyte cartridge is to follow.

Guaranteed for life?

Ampex once ventured into the domestic video cassette market, but margins were too thin for their liking. They left, leaving the field open to the Japanese big boys TDK, Fuji, Sony, and Maxell (Hitachi). Scotch tapes, made by U.S. company 3M - Minnesota Mining & Manufacturing, dominated the U.K. market through innovative advertising, rather than superior quality.

In Europe video tape production is led by BASF - Badische Aniline und Soda Fabrik, who also dabble in floppy disks. In fact most magnetic tape manufacturers have a computer products division for floppies and now, more importantly, optical discs.

Tape quality is an important factor in the broadcast environment, so there were several manufacturers that were showing tape testing machines The systems are used to count the number of drop-outs, and therefore the acceptability, of video tape.

Research Technology International also had a combined tape inspector/cleaner. The TapeChek takes standard VHS cassettes and cleans and polishes the tape's surface. An advanced optical system

CONTINUED ON PAGE 66

VISION '95

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 65

also inspects the tape for damage such as; creases, oxide shedding, tears, and the dreaded crinkly edge. The basic machine costs £4,000, with additional options like bulk erase, adding to that price.

The machine is used by law enforcement agencies to recycle video surveillance tapes. At one time these tapes were being used on a 'use once only' basis, but costs proved prohibitive. By investing in an RTI TapeChek the tape can be repeatedly used, then discarded when it fails a preset quality level. Some brands manage 20 recording cycles before being binned. So beware of guarantees that promise a lifetime of re-recording - whose life, yours, or that of the video heads in your VCR (approximately 2,000 hours).

BASF had their full range of media on show.

Amiga Makes a Stand

There are a number of companies that offer computer generated prompting equipment, but only one that does it on the Amiga. EDS Portaprompt originally used the A500, adapting it to take a folding LCD screen, but now they have to use A1200s.

The model on the stand was one of the first A1200 HDs off of the Amiga Technologies production line, and Jim Keating was proudly showing it off. A complete unit consists of the A1200 mounted on top of a metal base unit. This also holds the mini-TV screen for the prompting operator, power supply, and speed controller.

Jim Kesting told ***AUI*** that although the PC can provide scrolling text for prompting, it cannot do it as well as the Amiga. Well we all knew that anyway, didn't we? EDS not only provide the computer side of prompting, but also the special screens and monitors.

You may have seen these at conferences where the speaker stands in front of an angled glass plate. This is the semi-silvered mirror onto which the text is projected. For TV use this mirror is mounted in front of the camera, while for less obvious prompting EDS developed the ET.

Cleverly disguised, the ET looks like any run of the mill spot lamp from the rear - the angle the audience views it, but where the bulb would normally be, there is a circular TV screen on which the prompting words appear. This is a boon for the theatre industry as the unit can be part of a stage set with the actors walking around it. Thus concealed it does not draw the attention and provides instant help for the actor who 'dries'.

Unfortunately EDS do not sell as many complete Amiga systems as they would like, but software sales have been good to existing Amiga owners who work in TV. A complete Digiprompt DP1200 would cost you £2,300.

With the A4000 (plus the 060 chips) about to reappear, the field of professional computer graphics and effects is still there for the Amiga to win. ***AUI***

Kodak's Cineon digital film scanning and manipulation packer.

Restore those tired video cassettes with RTI's TapeChek.

The return of the Amiga...Still in there with the best.

Contacts

Altus (Hitech Systems Ltd.)	- 01256 780880
Ampex	- 01734 302240
BASF	- 0181 908 3188
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On Line

This month it is Anthony Mael, Anne Dall and other keen Netters who scurry along the silken strands of the world wide web and come back bitten by the bug of the Network.

The world having been invaded by the personal computer may well shortly, if many who are who antagonistic to the global dominance of Microsoft and Intel are to be believed, run away from the pesky tabletop things. Oracle boss Larry Ellison has been busily hammering away at the idea of a set-top box 'device' to replace the PC to fulfil this dream. So all you need would be a cheap unit to connect you to some powerful distant server and then it's goodbye to the PC. Well, maybe...

Another possible straw in the wind caught on the Web is the idea that you can get onto the Internet without a computer at all. This somewhat startling notion emerges from Sweden where a broadcasting company, Infral, is about to test a text-only service on the Internet. All you need for this is a touchtone phone and a teletext equipped TV set.

Yes, with these two very domestic appliances, it is claimed that you can send email and even browse the World Wide Web. What you do is dial up a computer at the TV station and enter commands with the telephone keypad. The message is then transmitted - broadcast in fact - in teletext format and displayed on the TV screen. You don't need a modem or a computer to get through, just your phone.

IBIT of Fun?

Infral calls the system IBIT - Internet Browser for Interactive Teletext. IBIT works on standard teletext technology with any compatible terrestrial, cable, or satellite TV. Infral's parent company, Kinnevik, will soon be testing the system out on its Swedish cable network.

By following the instructions on a teletext page you can join the system. First you must call the TV company and their computer gives you a mailbox and PIN number. You then select a teletext page on the TV and this becomes your temporary Web access or email location.

One of the problems may well be that although the PIN number will stop anyone getting into your email, other users could see which pages you are browsing through on the Web. (That soft core porn site which you accessed entirely by mistake yesterday. Do you want the neighbours to know when you accidentally, of course, visit it again?)

Somewhat candyflossy to read but 'fun' maybe to visit.

Infral says that each of its computers can handle up to a million mailboxes. However the limitation is that present teletext systems don't have much space available after the "professional" users have given you all that stuff about today's recipes. So there might be only a few hundred pages available to IBIT for accessing the Internet at one time.

Nevertheless, once online, the real problem of the system is that you have to enter a 2-digit code for each character. So it could take you aeons to key in a long email message, which might mean that you keep your messages down to the minimum words - no bad thing perhaps. Brevity, as someone said, being the soul of wit - whatever that might mean. Apparently, the BBC's Ceefax people have already had a demonstration of IBIT and have been very impressed.

Teletext is an odd technology, and though many people use it occasionally, it has not really assumed a key role in communications. It would be ironic if the medium that is clearly overtaking it - the Internet - should prove to be a way of making it really popular. If the world at large could be offered the advantages of linking up to the Web and sending email without a computer, the very cheapness and universality of the TV based teletext system might well encourage a whole new audience. One that would not enrich Microsoft, Intel, or even Oracle by using their expensive devices.

Find Your Thrill...

On Blueberry Hill... Ending our Louis Armstrong imitation, we pass on to a new site on the WWW named after that famous song. Why? Well the online begetters of this fruitfully attractive sounding location are a design consultancy called surprise, surprise, Blueberry.

They somewhat gushingly claim that their driving force is "enthusiasm". They also believe in giving something back. Though we're not quite sure to what they're giving to whom, we are impressed. Do you know anyone else talking like that on the Net? (Thankfully, neither do we.)

Blueberry told ***AUI*** - speaking in the majestic third person about themselves - "Their corporate 'culture' has evolved into consistent pro-activity and above all having 'fun'. (Their quotes) There is a conscious effort to avoid joining the ranks of the stereotypical, jargon-speaking and acronym led competition." Oh really? We would happy about that, we're sure, if we knew what it meant.

Riding the Internet Wave.

Nevertheless, the design talents of Blueberry, rather more satisfying than their literary abilities, make us think that their site is well worth a visit. It certainly seems lively and colourful and was created from scratch by a team of four in just four months.

Blueberry say they are going to make it even livelier with audio, video, and virtual walkthroughs. They are open to suggestions for changes by anyone who cares to contact them.

The only thing we have to complain about really is their OTT writing style. No, Blueberry, this will not be "the ultimate interactive web experience" - there will be plenty more thrills to come. Blueberry Hill is on http://www.blueberry.co.uk/

Cyberia 2

Cyberia, owners of the UK's first Cyber Cafe in Central London are moving out to the sticks. They have opened their second Cyberia caff in the leafy, if somewhat boring, London suburb of Kingston on Thames - once the unfortunate constituency of Norman (Black Wednesday? We planned it all along!) Lamont, ex-Chancellor of the Exchequer. We wonder if he'll visit the trendy new cafe to plot Internetted revenge on John Major, or in between pleas for a new seat in Parliament.

It seems that Cyber Cafe's owners, impressed by the success of their first venture are, planning to franchise the operation with the intention of having other Cyber Caffs popping up all over the country. You have been warned.

If you want to know when - if - they will be coming your way you can contact them on:
Hunter@cyberdiner.easynet.co.uk

One for the Road

There is one site on the Net that would certainly appeal to ex-CBM MD Steve Franklin. Jack Daniels with Coca-Cola was the favourite drink of the ex-Commodore Boss- and perhaps still is. The American whiskey company - note the 'e' in whiskey, which distinguishes it from Scotch - have put up a site that offers you a tour of their famed Lynchburg distillery in Tennessee. Here you can also find background information on the area where the distillery is and, believe it or not, a CyberBar. Shame that the Internet doesn't deliver the real thing, accompanied by Jack Daniels, of course, Steve. Drink your fill, virtually, at http://www.infi.net/jack-daniels

Ideal for keeping the CyberParty going.

Surfing With Silicon

You may think that supplying loads of high priced - some say overpriced - computers to games developers, and making loads of dough out of it as well, would be enough. But no, Silicon Graphics want into the Net too. They are on the WWW with a site called Silicon Surf and provide info such as "Who we are" and, modestly "Awesome Products". You can guess whose products they find awesome.

SGI are keen to tell the Net world about their workstations and servers, their authoring tools, and other software. Which don't come cheap, but we cannot deny that they supply "awesome" stuff. Surf's Up - Catch the Wave is their let's get hip slogan.

If you want to surf the Silicon wave they are on:
http://www-europe.sgi.com

On Line

CONTINUED

Now Hear This

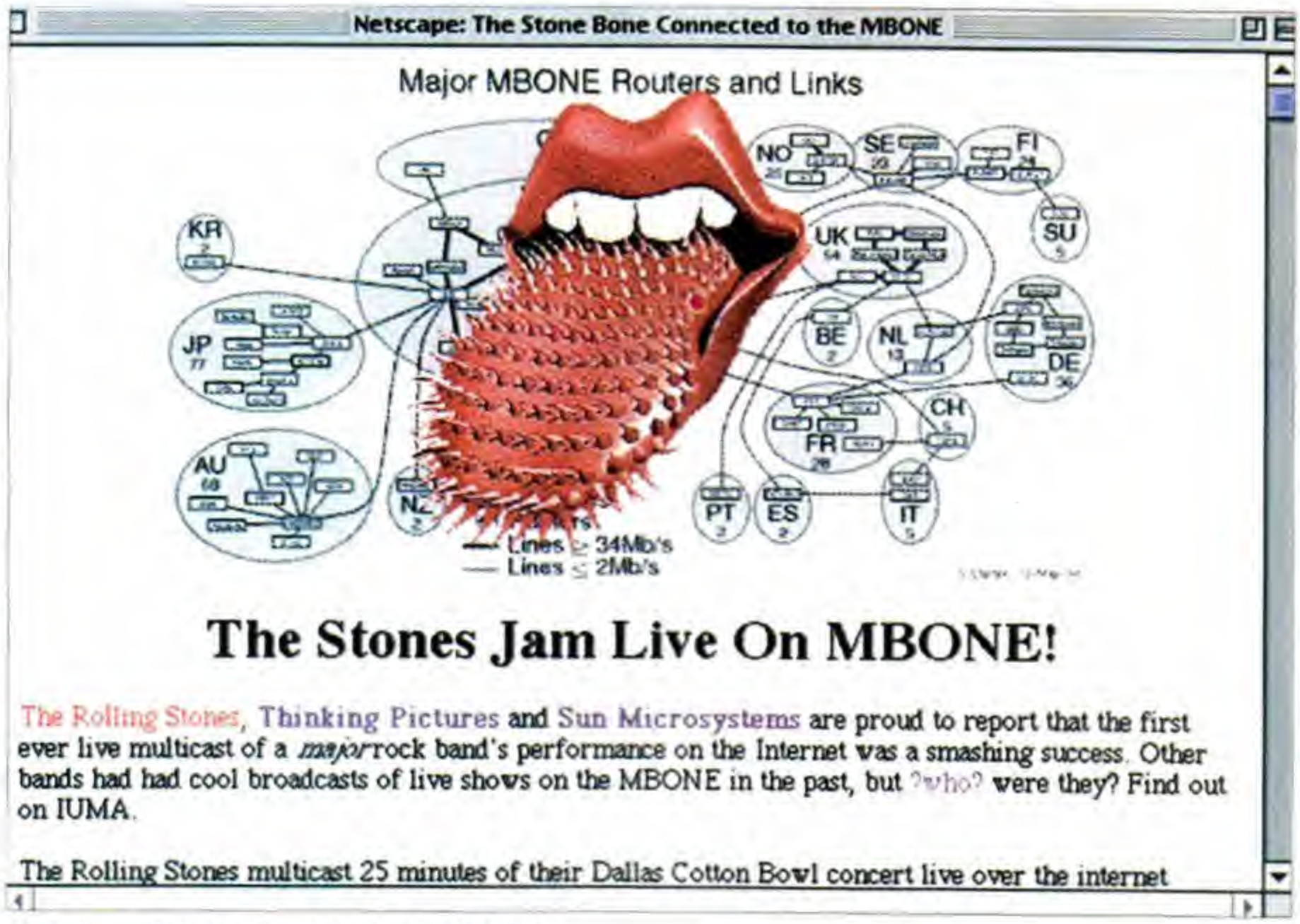
US company Progressive Networks have launched on to the previously unsuspecting, and almost silent, Net world Real Audio. This is a client-server software system that allows users on the World Wide Web to hear audio files in real time. Before this release, you had to download audio if you wanted to hear it. Now you can listen to it first. As a minute's audio can take ages, possibly as much as 15 to 20 minutes to download, RealAudio could prove a distinct advantage. The system has already been used by radio stations who are anxious not to be left out of the rush of publishers and broadcasters onto the Net. The system consists of the RealAudio Player and RealAudio Server. The Player allows you to hear files which have been created using the Server, which costs about £1500. If you would like to know more about RealAudio or to download the free Player, Progressive Networks can be found at http://www.realaudio.com.

Breaking the MBone

Talking of sound... The Rolling Stones, ever wanting to stay young enough to be with the hip crowd, got themselves onto the Net recently with a broadcast of a gig from the Dallas Cotton Bowl. Actually we thought it was called the Superbowl and were once shown over the place where the frightfully huge Dallas Cowboys blitz everyone else into smithereens. In the group there was this girl, a cheerleader from Austin... but that's another story. In what is claimed to be "the first ever live multicast of a major rock band's performance on the Internet" the Stones Internetted 25 minutes of their concert live, sponsored by the generous Sun Systems computer workstation company.

The "multicast" was put out on MBone which is a fairly elementary video transmission system for which you need a pretty powerful computer and something like a connection to ISDN, which most of us don't have. So not too many of the Stones aging fans would have been able to tune into this hysterical, er... historical, event.

Doubtless we are going to be able to access more and more similar 'happenings' - to use the word appropriate to the near OAP Rollers - through the Net. Though let's hope that as technology gets better and we are able to see more clearly what is coming our way, we don't have to look at Grandfather Jagger poncing around the stage in a manner far too undignified for a man of his age - even if the wrinkly rock star can still sell loads of tickets to the mortgage paying nostalgia crowd.



Jaggerd tongues, to be kept strictly in the cheek and off the Net.

Spams off

Usenet, largely made up of newsgroups, is where you can connect to thousands of different topics, including Amiga ones. What annoys, infuriates even, the users of these newsgroups is when someone comes in with an inconsequential intervention right off the subject. The most infuriating of all of these is an unsolicited advertisement - "spam".

Spam is - are? - deeply resented by the dedicated anti-commercial community of the Internet. The first recorded major example of this problem, and the reaction to it, was when an American lawyer sent out an advertisement for his ambulance chasing services which then found its way onto the screens of many thousands of immediately irate Netters. Their response was to "flame" the offending attorney by sending so many messages to him that his whole system was jammed up. He had to retire from the network, but not before he had received messages from many thousands of potential clients.

Spams are still being sent to many of the newsgroups on Usenet. They advertise all sorts of things from dating agencies to ways to multiply your savings in double quick time. (Dream on!). As the Internet has no governing body, no-one can officially take action. Most people simply delete the spam, but sufficient responses are made for there to be a constant flow of these annoying "junk mail" style messages.

Perhaps the days of spam on the Internet menu are numbered. A new program called NoCeM - "No see 'em - get it? - has been released by a programming group called Cancelmoose. To use NoCeM a user subscribes to a special newsgroup. At the start of a Usenet session, when you download, the program can then filter out any spam that arrives.

Cancelmoose is not just a programming group, but also the name of a program automatically searches out and identifies spams. It picked up nearly 20,000 spams in its first week of operation.

While you may want to double your money double quick and so would be happy to be given the opportunity through the Internet, you also may not. The new program at least gives you the chance to avoid time and money wasted on things in which you have no interest.

If only we could do the same with the "junk" that arrives by snail-mail.

Incider Surfing

What was claimed to be one of the "biggest and most innovative Internet campaigns ever seen in the UK" - how many Internet campaigns have there been so far? - was launched on Halloween by none other than Martin (slurp, slurp) Witton's favourite tipple.

Merrydown Cider, or as the egregious Witton calls it "Mari Down Cider", that ruin of many a virgin, has come up with what they call "a ground-breaking online

CONTINUED ON PAGE 72

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On Line

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experience all themed around 'The Dark Side of the Country' ". (Could that be the bit of the countryside where the Witton leads them from the primrose path?) Anyway, Merrydown's campaign, due to last three months, consists of Merrydown icons "positioned on fifty web sites, including college and specialist sites covering topics from dance music and clubbing" - no, we assume that is not the virgins defending their honour with the help of Merrydown bottles - "to paganism and archeology."

By clicking on the Merrydown icons the Net surfer will enter "the enigmatic world of Merrydown cider" Wow! It's the first time we realised that cider was enigmatic!

According to Merrydown, there is a total of nearly 13 million different combinations - we'd welcome any ***AUI*** reader checking that out and letting us know if thats true. These are still and moving images, text, and Merrydown claim that each user will be presented with an entirely different Web experience each time they try out an icon.

They also say they've come up with a new server program which doesn't use the standard hypertext mark-up language (HTML) and makes the transmission to the user of images, text and graphics much better.

"The Merrydown Experience" - virgins beware! - is on:
http://www.states51.co.uk

Those Who Can..Hyperlink

Information HyperLink is a consultancy that creates material for anyone who wants to get onto the Net, especially companies, and also teaches them how to maintain their own sites. It's not often that such organisations go out on a limb and present their own material too. As Bernard Shaw said, "Those who can, do. Those who can't, teach."

In this case IHL do both and they have thought up some interesting names for their sites. "The International Communique" provides information on current affairs, finance and business. "Thesis" offers Internet news, science and technology. "The Muse" is there for creative arts, music and literature.

"The Weaver" takes Netters into the alternative world with mind, body and spirit material, and lastly there is "Balance" which is about lifestyle, health and fitness.

As IHL rightly point out, if they want to show people what they can do, actually going out and doing it is the best way. IHL sites are on URL:http://www.hyperlink.com

Digital IDs

A new company called Verisign, intended to handle the distribution of Internet users' digital IDs has been set up RSA Data Security, the leading provider of digital encryption software for the Internet. The new company is financed by RSA in collaboration with, among others, Mitsubishi and Visa International.

Like the driver's license these IDs can be used to prove identity. RSA holds the patent on the underlying cryptographic technology of the two key encryption standards on the Web, NetScape's SSL and Terisa Systems' S-HTTP, so Verisign will, in effect, become the single ID registration company for the whole Internet.

Apple, NetScape, and Sun Systems, have already announced that they will integrate digital IDs into their software. Verisign are at info@verisign.com

Pictures Worth a Thousand Words?

A US based company, Prospero, has brought out Global Chat, a software package that lets you put live interaction on the Web. They say that the program will give you the tools to add graphics and sound clips to what were, until now, only text-based chat sessions. Now, you can demand a visual to see whether the person you are chatting with is really what they claim to be - male or female. This should stop the folk who are reputed to pretend that they are of the opposite sex - whichever it is you want. If you want to use Global Chat for non-commercial use, you can download it free from Prospero Systems on:
http://www.prospero.com/gloalchat

Gender Wars

Feminists in the USA are not too happy about some of the material that goes onto the Web. There are declarations, generally unprovable, that over 25% of the stuff on some areas is pornographic or near porn. However one somewhat dubious site that claims to be to be at least pseudo-scientific about the female form is the Babes on the Web page. The author of these pages sets himself up as a judge of the pulchritude available to Netters by rating women's Web page photos according to his "Babe-ometer". The blatantly male chauvinistic style of this site has, as you may imagine, aroused some vociferous criticism and opposition.

Doing the sensible thing and fighting fire with fire, a certain Blake Kritzberg, a woman, has come up with "Babes on the Web II". This contains photos of men, preferably "beefcake", who also get ratings. (No, that doesn't rule out 99% of the men who use the Net, or so we're told.)

If you want to see what's going down with the babes in the wood - sorry Net - in the Cheesecake or the Beefcake mode, "Babes I" is at http://www.tyrell.net/-robtoups/BABE.html and "Babes II" is at http://ucsub.colorado.edu/-kritzber/new/babes.html

Gun Crazy

Tennessee is the State of the Internet art this month.s After Jack Daniels comes the country singing capital of the world, Nashville. There the police department, no less, have come onto the World Wide Web with some really horrendous tests to let you know just how menacing the world is around you - or at least in the USA.

In the section, "Are You Going to Be Murdered?", it has among many others, the following questions:

"Does your local police have a SWAT team?" (Oddly, we don't think ours has.)

"Do you have a loaded firearm within 15 feet of you?" (Of course, we do. It's necessary to protect ourselves against people like Bud Vennos.)

"Are you going to be raped, robbed, stabbed, shot or beaten?" (Well, not today, thank you.)

"Do you open your door to strangers when you are unarmed?" (Never, we always go to pay the milkman carrying a Kalashnikov.)

It certainly seems that the world is a terrifying place in Nashville and we always thought that the most awful things there were Elvis Presley, and some of those Tammy Wynette songs. Apparently, if you stand by your man in Nashville today you'd better be carrying a .45 at least. Help. For a really scary visit, try:
http://www.nashville.net/-police

Nuclear No No

If you visit Nashville for a frightener, the truly horrifying activity of the world, testing nuclear bombs, might seem far away. So one site which you might wish to boycott if you don't like France's President Chirac's lunatic desire to blow up South Pacific atolls is France's Online Embassy. Here is a history of French diplomacy. Ah, French diplomacy... as exampled by their ignoring everyone around the world who believe that nuclear testing is dangerous. And there is also a description of French art currently on display in Washington, USA.

With another example of their peculiar attitude to the world, the French Government have failed to include any graphics, even in a site about art. Perhaps the nuclear option that Chirac is pursuing with such absurd obstinacy has gone to his head and blown his mind.

The site to boycott (or flame with a mushroom cloud?) is at http://town.hall.org/travel/france/embassy/index.html.

(Is ***AUI*** the only magazine to tell you where NOT to go on the Internet?). ***AUI***

AUI On-Line

If you have any news, comments, letters, or technical questions, you can contact ***AUI*** directly using this e-mail address:

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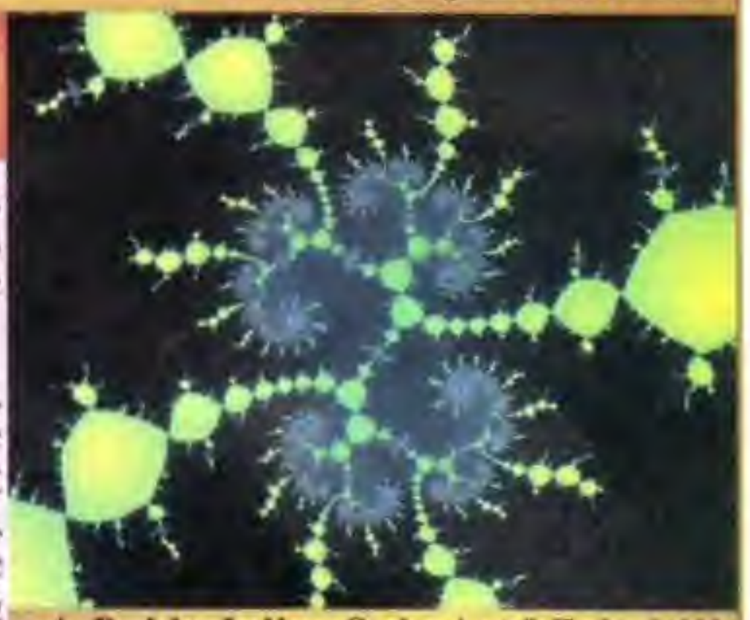

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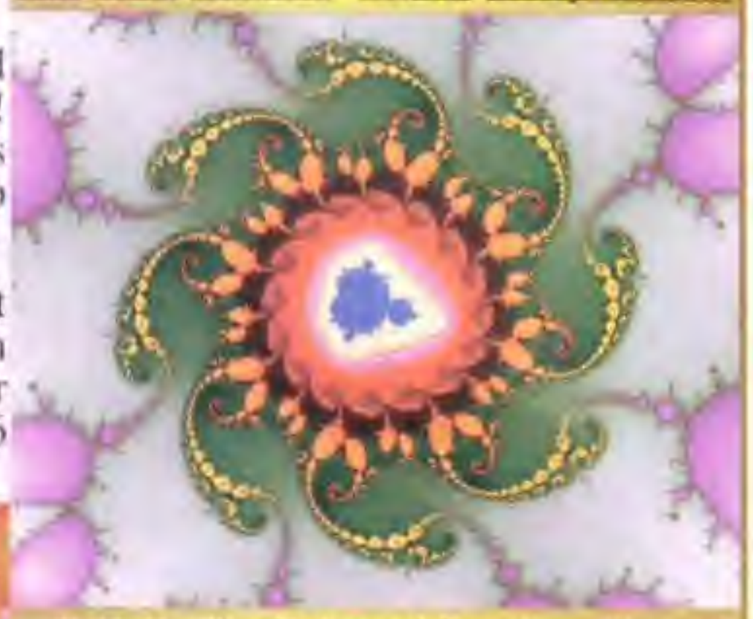

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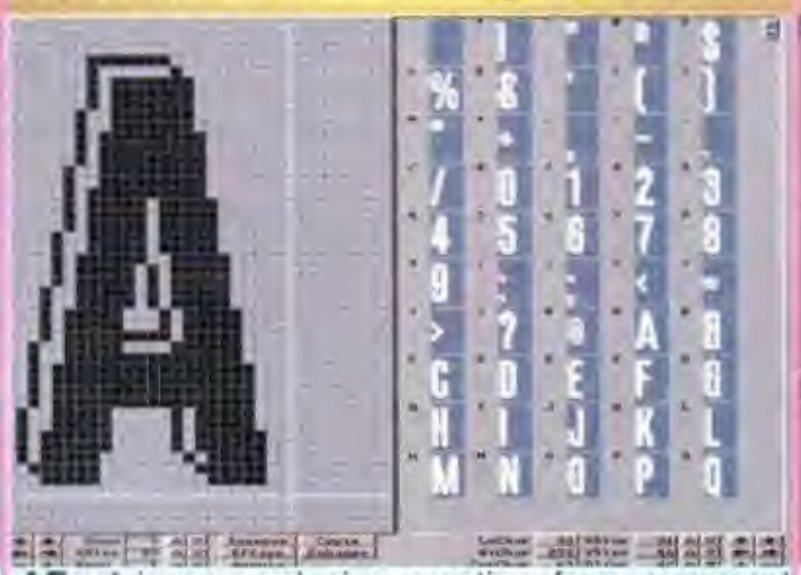

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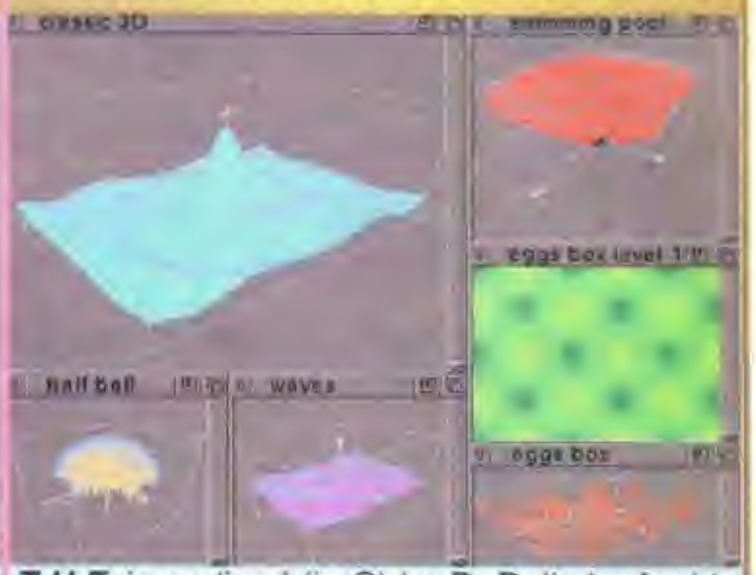

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Showing in Four Colour

Printing is not just for an Amiga and a dot-matrix. Today it is an entering a new and more powerful world, as John Russell reports

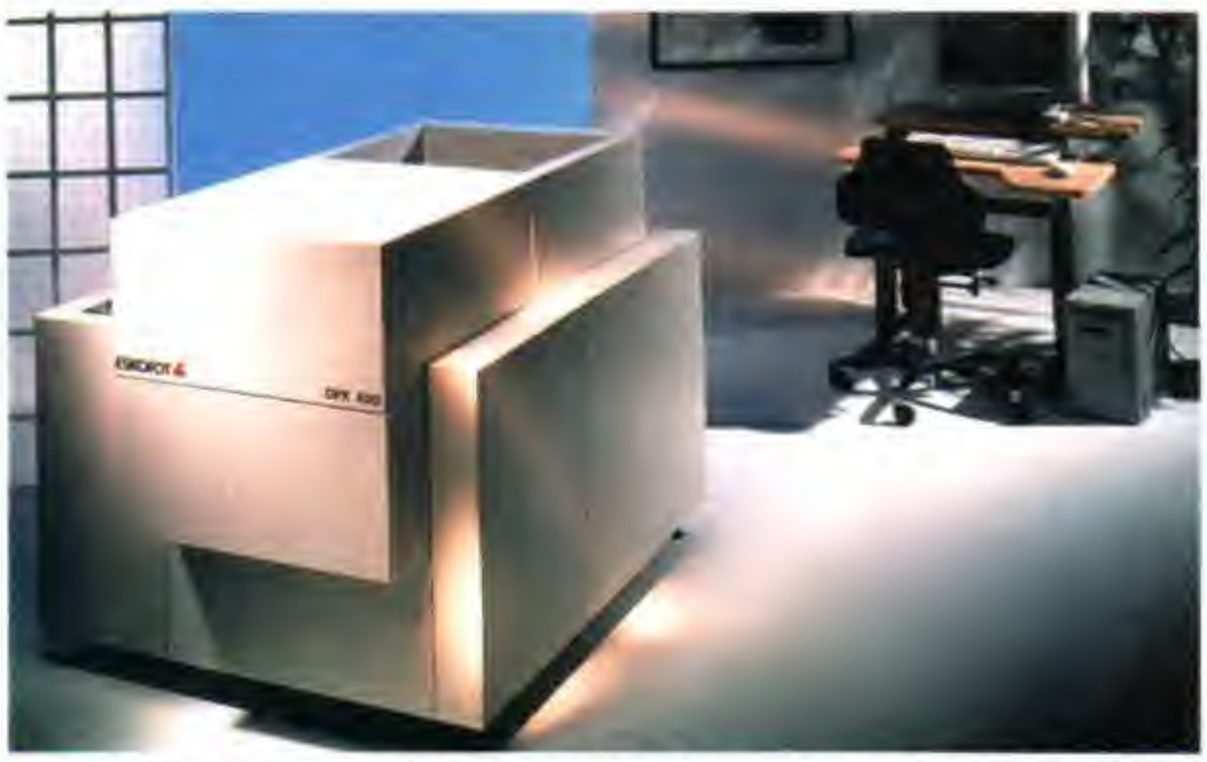
Amiga users are often keen desktop publishers. Now the technology is making ever higher quality colour printing possible both for the home and the professional user.

The Printing Show was dominated by the Apple Macintosh. This year the computers on display were evenly split between Power Macs and Pentium PCs. The Amiga? Don't ask!

The Printing Show is not aimed at the home publisher, but there was interesting equipment that could be used for that purpose. Up and down the country there are guys turning out 'fanzines'. These are small, usually A5, magazines that are produced to support a particular subject - football clubs, science-fiction groups, or train spotters.

Those that have a limited print run can be easily knocked out on a laser printer. The next step up is the local copy shop. While for runs of up to a couple of thousand a proper printer would be employed. This method obviously takes up a fair proportion of the cover price of the fanzine.

Now there is a machine that can be used from home, and will pay for itself relatively quickly. It looks like a photocopier, but the Risograph 3750 will happily churn out up to 120 black & white copies per minute at a 400 dpi resolution.



Looking more like a giant shredder, the Eskofot DPX 420 is an all-in-one digital printing-plate maker. Spot the Power Mac by the desk.

The secret of this speed is the fact that the Riso machine acts more like a printing press than a photocopier. The original artwork can be downloaded from computer, the Riso can accept HP Laserjet or Postscript languages, or scanned using the machines built-in digitizer.

From this data a printing 'plate' is made which is then used to produce up to 1500 copies before it wears out. The Riso does not use toner, but real ink. Each cartridge lasts for about 15,000 A3 pages before it needs replacing, and costs just under a £100. A quick tap on the calculator reveals that a 36 page A4 magazine would cost about £250 to run off a 1000 issues. Unfortunately the £10,000 Riso does not collate, fold, and staple all these pages for you. Still you cannot have everything.

Not for the home publisher - Agfa's Chromapress is designed for fast, short-run, colour printing.

Small and Large

In a different class of printing is the specially imported from Japan, 18 ton, four colour printing press from Oliver. At the show this and a number of other, smaller, machines were busily printing posters by the thousand for the gathered crowds.

It's not only printing on show here, but also a wide variety of systems designed to create the pages in the first place. And then to get those pages outputted to the plate-maker without going through the traditional film making stage. This not only improves the quality by removing a 'generation' from the printing process, but makes printing slightly more environmentally friendly. Fewer chemicals to dispose of, you see.

Going Green

Another exhibitor, Polaroid (who else?) demonstrated Drytech film. Using a carbon base, the Drytech method requires no wet processing - only heat. It may take a little longer to develop, but with the new and stringent Euro-regulations concerning the disposal of noxious chemicals, makes it a viable and cheaper alternative to conventional processing.

Also on the environmentally friendly trail were Agfa. Their new Hydroprint Type 2 is a polyester printing plate designed for runs of up to 30,000. The novel feature is that this plate develops in water! Agfa were producing their own colour literature on the stand directly from a Power Mac/Agfa colour copier combination.

Large scale reprocessing of used inkjet cartridges is being undertaken by Applied Film industries Company. Following a £600,000 investment in new machinery, the company can recycle 2000 cartridges per day. Their only problem is that not enough firms are taking advantage of this service.

A fiERY end

Several years ago the novel way to get high quality colour output from a computer was to use it in conjunction with a fiERY equipped digital colour photocopier. The first system I ever saw was based on Minolta. Now Canon are leading the field with the 800 series, and the fiERY is being termed 'old technology' as it is based purely on a RISC hardware solution with limited upgrading capabilities.

Agfa's Hydroprint technology in use. A novel polyester printing plate that's developed using water alone.

Multiproducts with – WOW! – Multitasking.

Independent reprographics house Thames, who were celebrating 25 years in the business, have a range of digital colour printing solutions. Simon Butterworth presented a hands-on demonstration of their Canon/ Hotspur combination. The Hotspur is a Pentium based RIP (Raster-Image Processor) Network Server housed in a very square black box. It is fitted with 128Mb of ram and CD based operating system. This method avoids losing WindowsNT should something nasty happen, such as a lightning strike, which would normally corrupt a hard disk.

The advantage of Hotspur is its ability to have faster processors and newer software installed, as and when they become available. Simon Butterworth was proud to relate that he still owns three Commodore Pets and an Amiga A500. The Pets, one of each model, are kept in his loft as part of a private museum of computing in the late Seventies. He started his career by selling Commodore 64s at Debenhams, and was surprised to hear of Amiga Technologies plans for the best selling, but dated, machine.

Silica Pre Press were offering the Scanmate range of hi-res scanners. Yours for a few tens of thousands of pounds.

Silica Surprise

Another, indirect, link to the Amiga was to be found in the shape of Silica Pre Press. This is a sister company of the Amiga supplier Silica, (now in some trouble – see story in the Newsfile). They have a range of high resolution drum scanners. Unlike a hand scanner, whose maximum resolution is 400 dpi, a drum scanner can resolve up to 11,000 dpi. However you do pay for all these extra dots. The Scanmate 3000 was just under £20,000, while the top of the range 16-bit colour Scanmate 11000 was £37,000. Don't forget the VAT.

A second surprise was to find a company called 3D Images at the show. This small firm, run by the genial David Burder, specializes in the production of stereoscopic images. Not only the traditional red/green anaglyphs, which give a monochrome 3D image when viewed with the proper glasses, but also full colour stereoscopic pictures and a new product - Virtual Video.

This is a lenticular system is similar to those badges which hold two separate images that can only be seen by rocking them to and fro. Virtual Video has the capability to hold many more. Now it is possible to have several frames from film or video held on one, daylight viewable, plastic disc. A recent example was the keyring given away on the November issue of Smash Hits magazine.

David Burder uses an Amiga at his studio, but he is a photographer by trade. Consequently he is looking for artists capable of producing professional quality, solid modelled, 3D views using Lightwave or similar software.

A 3D fox can be seen its all its glory with a special pair of glasses.

If you would like a pair of the special glasses to view the image of the fox, then send a stamped, self-addressed, envelope to 3D Images, ***AUI*** Offer, 31 The Chine, London N21 2EA. Prospective 3D artists should apply to the same address.

While some of these machines have costs far out of the reach of the average user, the technology is what anyone involved in even fanzines or similar publishing activities would aspire to. However, if it seems out of reach today remember that not long ago computers of the power of the Amiga or less filled large rooms... ***AUI***

The Amiga Answer Machine...

Andy Eskelson, master of the all the mysteries of the Amiga, answers your queries and solves your problems.

Answer Types

APPS	Programs etc]
VIDEO	Video related problems
COMMS	Communications
PROG	Programming
OS	Operating System
PRINT	Printer Problems
COVERDISK	Cover Disk problems
OTHER	For Anything Else

OS

Dear *AUI*,
A nice short question for you:- Now that the Escom/Commodore thing has finally been settled, where are the C and assembler include files, developers packs, etc., available from?

Erkin Path
Blackpool

Dear Erkin,
*At the moment the developer support has not been set up yet. However, if you purchase a C compiler, or assembler, the include files will be there. It will take a little while for the support to get sorted out. I am keeping a careful eye on the situation. As soon as things get set up there will be an anouncement in the **AUI** news pages at the very least.*

PRINT

Dear *AUI*,
I have a 1200, a HI-Q Workstation fitted with a Sanyo CD, and stereo speakers. The 1200 has an 85Mb IDE HardDisk which is, I believe, a 'Quantum'. This is partitioned into 35Mb 'Work' and about 50Mb, 'MyHardDisk'. I initially installed a 2Mb Trapdoor Memory Upgrade with a Clock, but no accelerator to give me 4Mb Ram total. I quickly found I needed more so decided to install an 8Mb SIMM to give me 10Mb and hopefully to speed everything up. After some initial difficulties with compatibility of the SIMM/memory board (why does the blurb say 'no adjustments are necessary, all that is required is to unclip the 2Mb and replace it with a larger one'.) ably sorted out for me by those lovely people at First Computers Leeds, in the form of Alex Cook, I eventually got everything up and running except the Citizen 24 pin dot matrix printer, Model 200C, which flatly refused to activate its own Printmanager. I went to the trouble of firstly phoning Citizen (at great cost, on their insisted 0891 Number!). They were initially both helpful and sympathetic and promised to send me the up-dated version of the Citizen Print Manager which they did, but it didn't work. So I again phoned Citizen (on their 0891 Number) and spoke to a Paul Abbot, who was initially very helpful and sympathetic and after we had discussed the problem at length, promised to phone me back before 5pm with the answer. Needless to say he did not return my call as promised; next day I telephoned and spoke to him (again on this 0891 Number) and after a lot of prevarication he admitted they didn't know how to put it right and that because I had upgraded the memory that was obviously the cause of my problems and that was all there was to it. When I remonstrated and said that was rubbish - if 'WordWorth' was able, as it is, to instruct the Printer to work correctly, then it must be possible to instruct the Amiga 1200 to use the 'EpsonQ' Driver on board to operate, so the problem must lie with the Citizen Amiga PrintManager - all I need to know is - how do I write the instruction to the Amiga? He refused to discuss it or help me any more so I got bad tempered and told him where he can put his rotten Citizen Printers; that I will sell the blasted thing and get one that does work properly.

I am sure the problem is really easy to solve. If the printer will work with 'Wordworth' which utilises the EpsonQ Driver why cannot I tell the Amiga to use the EpsonQ Driver and why do I keep getting either Amigados 202 Messages - 'unable to print' or, as in the case of trying to print something out using MultiView, like the startup-sequence or a ClipArt picture like it used to do; does it now completely freeze and have to be reset ? I am sure Andy that you will say, all you need to do is... so please forgive my stupidity and help me restore my now very fast lovely 1200 to its former brilliance.

Ian Aisbitt
North Yorkshire

Dear Ian,
I must admit that I am a bit surprised at Citizen, but as you say it is very easy to set the Amiga to use EpsonQ. Open up Prefs and select printer. Click on EpsonQ and then save. That's all there is to it.

I am concerned about the 202 message, that is file not found. I wonder if you have somehow managed to delete the EpsonQ driver and left the Icon there. The printer drivers live in the DEVS: directory. Copy the EpsonQ driver from your master disks into your hard drive DEVS: directory and that should put everything to rights.

Railway Simulations for the Amiga

These are realistic railway simulations acclaimed by customers in over 20 countries, many of them working railway staff, now almost the whole range is available for the Amiga. They do not offer arcade-style graphics, simply realistic displays based on those used in modern signalling centres. Compatible with Workbench 1, 2 and 3, and hard disk compatible minimum of 1Mb required.

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Birmingham 1993 - Similar to the 1982 version (see above) but with the interim Cross-City service operating - electric only north to Lichfield, with diesel units maintaining the service south to Longbridge and Redditch. More HSTs on the cross-country routes, but still plenty of loco-changing. **£15.95**

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Still Crazy

after all these years...

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VIDEO

Dear *AUI*

I have had my A1200 for two years now and I have never experienced any problems with the machine, well that was until I bought a Microvitec 1438 monitor. My setup consists of a standard A1200, an Overdrive HD, and the MV 1438 monitor. Before I bought the monitor I used a TV set, but as I do a lot of wordprocessing in Wordworth 2.0 I got tired of the poor picture quality and I thought a monitor would help. Well it did help, but when I use Wordworth I obviously want to use the Productivity screenmodes, or the DBLPal, or any other screenmode instead of Pal Highres. But when I choose any other Screenmode than Pal Highres the screen begins to get corrupted after some time, not only in WordWorth, but also in Workbench and any other program that I use.

With corrupted I mean thin grey horizontal lines flickering all over the screen. It begins with a few lines and then it gradually gets worse, and it ends with black columns flickering at the bottom half of the screen.

When I phoned the retailer from whom I bought the monitor I was told that the problem was with my A1200 and not the monitor. He had heard about the problem before, but he didn't know what was wrong with the computer. To me it seems like some chip or whatever is running too hot as the problem doesn't occur until the computer has been turned on for some time. What I want to know is whether you have heard about this problem before. Do you have a solution to it? Or maybe some of your readers have the same problem?

Another question that comes to my mind is that because the problem didn't occur before I bought the MV 1438 I may very possibly have bought a computer which was faulty from the factory. Will the new owners of the Amiga, if necessary, replace my A1200 bearing in mind that my Amiga is not covered by any warranty any more?

K. Slange
Denmark

Dear K.Slange,
There have been some problems with early A1200s, but unless your Amiga is very old stock you should not be affected. The problems were also on ALL screenmodes as far as I remember. Your description sounds as if the monitor is losing sync, but it is not really possible for me to tell from your description. Try running your system with the overdrive unplugged, ie boot from floppy. If that helps then you might have a power problem.

Can you find another Amiga owner locally that you could try the monitor on. That would tell you if the monitor or your Amiga was the problem. When the problem occurs, switch the monitor off and leave the Amiga running. Switch the monitor back on after half an hour or so, if the problem clears and then comes back then it is likely that the problem is with the monitor. As your Amiga is out of warranty, the responsibility is all yours I'm afraid.

VIDEO

Dear *AUI,*

I currently own an A1200 with 1084S monitor, however I now wish to use the AGA screenmodes and have been informed that my monitor cannot handle them, so I am considering buying an official Commodore monitor that can handle all screen modes. However, I cannot find out whether the bi-sync 1942 can handle all modes, the technical difference between the 1950 and 1960, or if any of the Commodore monitors are low-radiation?

I read your review of the Samsung, Syncmaster range, but you said that they weren't compatible with all modes. Are they compatible with the games resolutions? I have a lot of games software, do all of these need the low rates. Will recent games work, Player Manager II and other non-DOS games with higher resolutions? My main concern is to be able to use a high resolution Workbench, but still be able to play the latest games. I hope you are able to answer some of my queries, I enclose an SAE for your response.

Ed Bowditch
Alton

Dear Ed,
Firstly, you are already using the AGA screenmodes, it's the resolution and the scan rates of the high resolution modes that the 1084 cannot use.

The 1942 will only work with some of the modes. The 1960 works with all the screenmodes, whereas the 1950 is a little more limited. Define low radiation, I don't consider VDU screens to be any worse than the domestic telly, but there is legislation that must be followed, and all VDUs meet one or more of the various regulations.

I don't have any information on the Samsung sorry.

A monitor is a monitor. Providing that it will work at the 'normal' low res scan rates there will be no problem. New games should work BUT they will probably try to switch the screen mode to whatever they want.

There are several manufacturers of Multi-Sync monitors, Thompson, Phillips, and NEC to name three. Many of the makes you see are 'badged'. Commodore have used Philips and Thompson in the past and stuck the Commodore label on them. I'm using the 1960, mainly because I like the Delta Gun arrangement better than the Trinitron system. It's not as bright, but I find it better for text work which I do an lot of. The Microvitec is probably the least expensive option to consider. The other third party monitors tend to be somewhat more up-market.

The best advice I can give is go and look at a few monitors if you can. If not buy from an Amiga dealer who can test the monitor on an Amiga system.

OTHER

Dear *AUI*

I enjoyed your feature Master of Disguise, from October's issue, which featured detailed reviews of Amiga emulators for the PC and Mac. However, I have a couple of questions which weren't completely answered by your article.

Firstly, I have successfully transferred files from the Mac to the Amiga by using the intermediate PC disk format. My girlfriend has a Mac LC-II which has the utility PC-Exchange, which allows the Mac to format and write to PC disks, which the Amiga (mine is a bog-standard A1200) can then read with CrossDOS. However, as an experiment, I tried to transfer the Mac system sounds over to the Amiga to load into OctaMED as raw sound samples, and although the files came over OK, they didn't work as raw samples. Can you recommend any PD program which would allow me to read Mac sound files, as my girlfriend has a whole pile of PD sound samples on the Mac which I'd love to get hold of.

Secondly, your article states that ShapeShifter 3 requires 4 megs of memory. Can you get away with only 2 megs? As a penniless student doctor, I haven't got the cash (yet) to spend on memory upgrades.

Thirdly, I used to own an A600 which I upgraded to 2Mb. I purchased a BBC Micro emulator,

which was excellent, and which I used to transfer files between my old Beeb (remember when 32K was a lot?), and my A600. All was well until I upgraded to my new 1200, which seems to run the emulator OK until you type the RUN command in BBC Basic, at which point I get an unrecoverable guru-type crash.

I tried various degrader utilities for the 1200, such as ReloKick, RunIt, Degrader and so forth, in case I was missing something simple, but to no avail. At this point I would normally contact the programmer, but the PD library that I bought the emulator from didn't include any programmer's details at all with the disk, so I have no idea who to talk to. I would love to purchase the latest Beeb emulator from the programmer, as I've still got tons of old Beeb stuff, and it's nice to have 2 or more virtual Beebs running on my Workbench.

Perhaps you can tell me of a different, A1200-compatible Beeb emulator, which I could buy, or perhaps some of your readers can help me get in touch with the author(s) of my program. The emulator was called simply The Emulator 1.00, and it says it was written by Ariadne Software. The PD company which supplied it is Five Star PD, and my machine is an unexpanded 1200, with a second disk drive (which caused no problems when I used it on the old 600 running the emulator) .

Finally, may I congratulate you on your excellent magazine. Six disks of stuff shoe-horned into 2 coverdisks is a tremendous feat: keep it up!

Aidan M O'Donnell
West Lothian

Dear Aiden
Aminet list a couple of programs, both in the mus/edit directory.

Masc.lzh converts raw files between the Amiga and Mac. And MacResourcer.lha works with snd and SOUN type mac files. There is also a MacSND_dt.lha which is a snd datatype that might be useful.

These are on the Aminet CD set1 disk D and on the main on-line network system.

You do need the 4 megs to run shapeshifter.

Ariadne ceased trading some time ago, and I've not seen any updates to the BBC emulator for many years now. Have you tried disabling the CPU caches (access the early boot screen and check-mark the disable CPU caches from the boot options menu. Also select the ECS display options as well. It is unlikely that this will work, but it is worth a try.

OTHER

Dear *AUI*,
Own system: A1200, 50MHz Blizzard 1230 mk III with 50MHz 68882 + 4Mb fast Ram, 270Mb internal IDE hard drive Technoplus external floppy.

Firstly, keep up the good work, fine publication and excellent coverdisks. But where has the batch install gone? It's no problem for an old timer, but sorely missed. I hope it returns on November 95 issue. Maybe I'm going blind, but I didn't see it on the install options.

Now for my queries:

Where do we stand these days regards to copyright on the following files from my previous Workbench disks:

Devs: Narrator.device, Libs: Translator.library, and the devs:mountlist speak: entry (which I have saved sequentially with a project Icon in Devs :Dosdrivers

I believe I am right in thinking I can use them. I have a few friends envious of my setup who are wondering if I could do the same on their machines. i.e. setup ARexx UPD, toolsdaemon and batch files with not only samples, but also the speak: device. Would copying the necessaries for them still be piracy after the downfall and previous dropped support of speak: by Commodore?

If someone somewhere still does hold copyright, is it possible to find out if there has been any updated versions in recent years and how to get them.

When you reply to people with seemingly simple problems please give them full paths to look at. There are lots of people around who still do not know for example the dosdrivers drawer is in the devs drawer of the workbench boot disk or System

partition, because they don't have icons. I appreciate that you try to do this already, but there have been many occasions over the last couple of years when your replies assume knowledge a fledgeling Amigan would flip at.

Am I being picky? OK I'll...

Mr N.T. Nelmes
Dunbartonshire

Dear Mr Nelmes,
Thanks for the info on the CC0: device, this has already been covered elsewhere.

Copyrights, all copyrights to Commodore products have been bought by Escom, and are managed by Amiga Technologies There was some problems with royalties I think, some years ago, as the narrator device or the Translator device was not copyright Commodore. Agreement was not reached and the system was excluded from future Amiga systems.

Providing that you have bought the system, you can make use of the files. I don't think that there was any stipulation on using them on one machine only, but as you legally have the software there would be no real grounds for objection. However, you cannot pass on the software.

The Mountlist is a simple text file, and is fully documented in the Amiga handbooks, so you could create a Mountlist without any problems at all.

There is a replacement Translator.library. It can be found on Aminet in the util/libs subdirectory and is called translator43.lha.

I think you are being slightly picky, but I'll take it as it was intended and keep an eye on my answers just for you. I normally tell readers to switch on show all files if they can so Icons should not be a problem. I also tailor the answers to match the ability of the person with the problem. After all it would be tedious for you if I spelled out every path and file.

OTHER

Dear *AUI*,
The system I have is: A1200 WB3 with a Seagate HD Blizzard 1230 II @ 40MHz Accelerator with 8Mb ram (no co-pro) connected to a Microvitec 1438 monitor and Epson LQ-570+ mono printer. All is working fine no problems.

Now one of my great loves is photography, a fair amount of my work being on 35mm. What I want to do is get the shot into Photogenics, or some other manipulation package, work on it, and get a product back of the right quality to sell. A scanner with transparency attachment is just too much.

As you can see from the enclosed information sheet I can get my work scanned if I use PC formatted disks (Will CrossDos do the trick?), but they quote a 4096x2732 pixel ratio that gives a 32Mb file or 2038 x 1366 that will give me a 8Mb file. Have you any idea as a guide what pixel ratio I can use that will fit on a standard DS DD (880k) Amiga disk?, and will a picture held as a JPEG file @100% be good enough to reproduce as an A4 page. If not, what is the best I can hope for? What will give me back the best 35mm transparency from the enclosed information.

I am thinking of getting a CD-ROM, but again there are a few things I need to know. The Blizzard has a connector for a SCSI II controller. Can I connect a CD ROM to it? As this is more expensive than the Squirrel and I don't know if you can read CD32 with it, my gut feeling tells me to get a Squirrel and Awia 300 package from HiSoft and leave the trap door alone, but I have read there may be problems with more than 4Mb ram and the squirrel, have you any feedback concerning the Blizzard in this respect? I've read that if the memory map starts at $2000000 then there will be a problem if more than 4Mb is added, because the Squirrel

lives at $600000 to $a000000. If it starts at $1f00000 then it is OK On entering show config in shell I get:

Ram Node type $a, Attributes $5 (fast) at $e000000-$e77ffff (7.5Meg)

Node type $a, Attributes $703 (chip) at $400-$1fffff (2 Meg)

Have I got a yes or no?, I'm lost.

If I had my work put on PhotoCD will Photogenics read it? If not what will?

Ron Homer
Birmingham

Dear Ron,
CrossDos will happily read and write PC disks. I have found it an advantage to format the disks on a PC first. Remember that you can only use 720k PC disks on the A1200. You would need a high density drive to make use of the 1.44Mb drives.

TIFF files do give some compression, hence the rather small file sizes. It does scale down, so a little under 128 x 170 will give about 1Mb Not very much at all.

A JPEG at 100% will expand to be exactly the same as the original picture fed into it. This is the lossless mode of operation. So if the original resolution was good enough you would find that it will print out okay. Unfortunately for you, going back to transparency will require the very large files otherwise the quality will not be there.

From the information that you have given me, the Blizzard has put its RAM well away from the PCMCIA area, but check with the suppliers (HiSoft) they will have better information than I will. As you say there have been some problems with PCMCIA type expansions. Generally if the extra RAM is directly on the accelerator card then it does not clash with the PCMCIA slot. It is also much faster to sit the RAM directly onto the processor bus.

I'm fairly sure that Photogenics supports PhotoCD. Again give Almathera a call to confirm. There are a few PhotoCD readers about in the PD world. A quick scan of the Aminet index comes up with:
apcd, hpcdtoppm, and PhotoCD AGA10. All of which claim to read and convert PhotoCD files to one format or another.

OTHER

Dear *AUI*,
I have an Amiga 1200, with 3Mb RAM, a 450Mb hard drive, an Epson LQ-100 printer and a Zappo CD-ROM and have a couple of questions.

Firstly, where can I get some .CGM clipart from? I have WordWorth 3.1 SE and am fed up with the poor, jagged, print quality of bitmap graphics in my documents. I am aware that Digita sell .CGM clipart, but I feel that this is expensive compared to the amount of data that can be stored on a CD for about twice the price. Do you know of any CDs that have .CGM clipart on them? I have a lot of .EPS clipart which unfortunately WordWorth 3.1 SE does not support. Are there any converters available?

Secondly, where can I get a colour VGA monitor from? About how much will it cost? I use a portable colour television at present but I am fed up with the poor quality picture especially when doing DTP work.

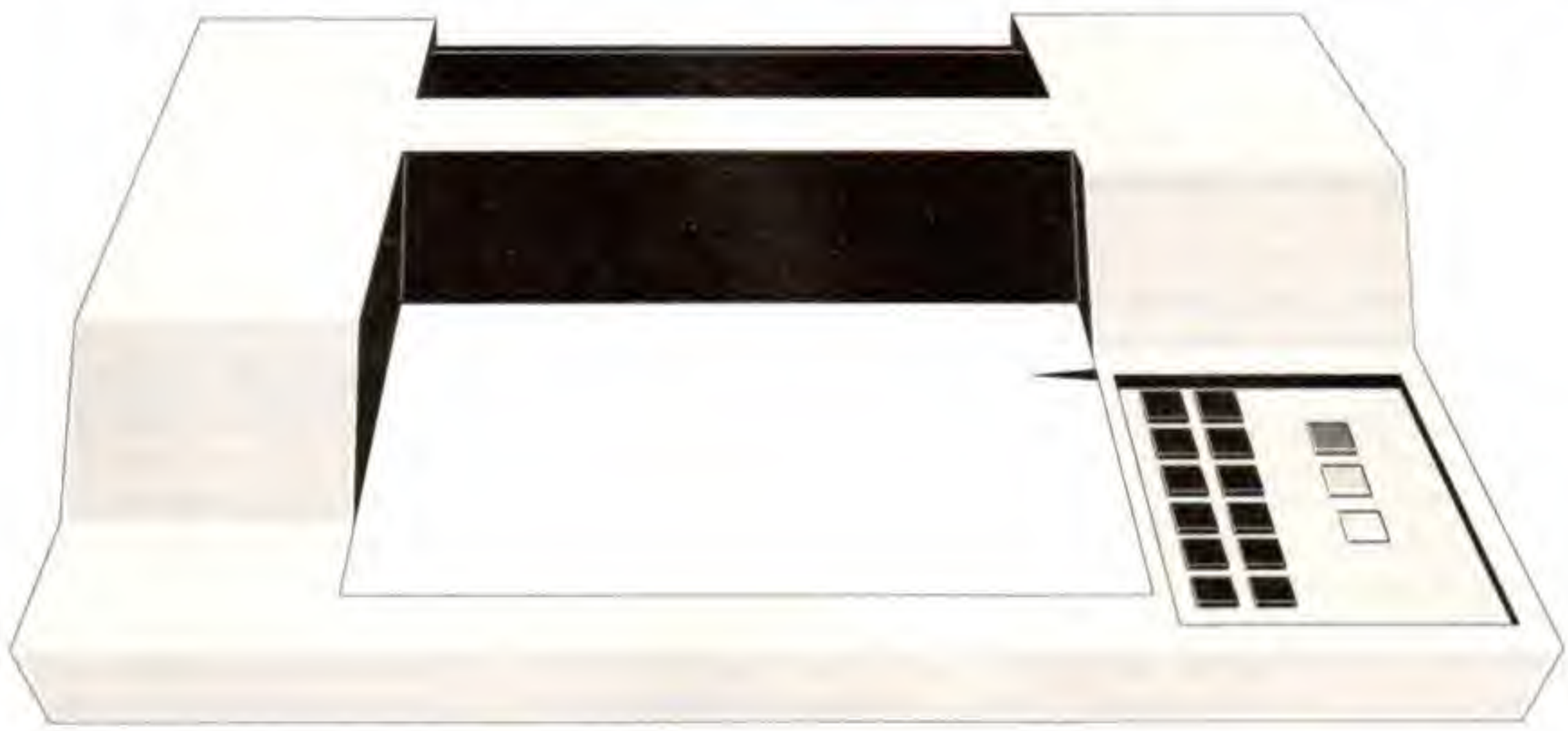
I would be very grateful if you could offer me some assistance in your unique magazine.

Gareth Moyle
Chester & Clwyd

Dear Gareth,
CGM (Computer Graphics Metafile) clipart seems to be very scarce indeed. I have looked through a lot of CDs and I can't find any. Your only hope would be a trawl through the various PD. libraries.

With the cost of such clip art it might be better to consider another package that can accept the EPS format. You could then scale them and output them as a bitmap to import into WordWorth. Professional page is one such package.

Go to a newsagents and pick up a copy of one of the 'fat' PC mags. You will find thousands of adverts for computer systems including monitors. The price will vary depending on the spec, one hundred and something pounds up to several thousand is the sort of price range. Remember that you need a true multi-standard if you want to use all the modes available to the Amiga. Most monitors don't like the low PAL scan rates at all. (It mainly affects game playing).



OTHER

Dear *AUI*,
I hope you could please answer a few questions which I have relating to connecting stuff to my Amiga.

First though, my system consists of a 2Mb A600 and citizen 240C which is connected to a portable TV using the Aerial socket. Now for my questions;

1. If I buy a new Amiga (when one becomes available) would I be able to connect this to my existing machine maybe via the serial port? Would I have to use SERNET, or PARNET for the parallel port, or would a null modem cable suffice? I also have NComm if this is of any use. Would I be able to use both machines to render the same object in Imagine? What I want to do is transfer data between machines using Workbench. I know the serial port is slow but will it be fine for me?

2. I have also acquired an old video recorder which I would like to connect to the Amiga to record animations. I don't want to overlay graphics onto video, just record graphics on their own. The software I have which may be of use: DPaint3, Take2, ImageFX and Movie -Setter. If I connect it could I just select it as a device from the requesters? The video has the following ports on it; RF in, RF out Video Out, Audio.

Could you please tell me what I need to connect to what? Thanks for an excellent mag and coverdisks.

Stuart Grey
Scunthorpe

Dear Stuart,
You can connect almost any computer to any other. It depends on how complex you want to get. In your situation there are two basic methods that you can use. The first is via the serial port, the second is via the parallel port. When you are using either port, you cannot use it for anything else. This means that if you use the parallel port you need to unplug your printer. This is

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E & O E

a pain, and you will find that a switch box makes life much easier.

PARNET is used to form a true network connection between the two Amigas, this uses the Parallel port.

SERNET provides the same functions as PARNET, but uses the serial port and is slower.

SERNET and PARNET are both slow, but the plus side is that you see the other machines drives appear on the local workbench. This means that you can drag items across using the mouse and workbench. SERNET is a pain to set up and needs a crossover or null-modem cable. PARNET is easier to set up, but requires a custom built cable.

You cannot use the other Amiga as a processing power boost. So you cannot render the same object. You could run a copy of your rendering package on the other machine and set it off rendering something else if you want to. If so there is very little point in connecting the two machines together, you might as well use a floppy to exchange the data.

If you use a crossover or null-modem cable, you could run a copy of Ncomm on each machine and use that to transfer files across. I've used this method many times and I find it workable.

Connect the two serial ports with the null modem cable, and run up Ncomm. Set both copies of Ncomm to the same comms settings. 38,400 baud, 8 bits 1 stop, RTS/CTS (hardware) handshaking. Set the upload and download protocol to Zmodem, and set AutoZmodem download. Set the download directory to point to a suitable drawer.

If all the connections are correct what you type on the keyboard of one machine should appear on the screen of the other. Select upload from the Ncomm menu and select the files that you want to transfer using the requester. When you select OK, Ncomm will send the files and the other copy of Ncomm will automatically detect that a file transfer is taking place and will receive the file and put it into the drawer you specified in the download directory option.

As you want to do things in a very simple manner, recording onto the VCR will be easy.

Connect the 'RF Out' of the VCR to the Aerial socket of your TV.

Connect the lead from your Amiga that used to connect to your TV into the 'RF In' connector on the VCR.

Play a tape on the VCR and tune your TV until you find the picture. Stop the tape. Make sure that you have the Amiga switched on. Tune a spare channel of the VCR until you see the Workbench picture on the TV. Now whenever you press record on the VCR, it will record the output of your Amiga.

There is no way of automating the recording process without using some very complex and expensive equipment.

OTHER

Dear *AUI*,
My setup is an A1200, 80Mb internal hard drive, a handy scanner, printer (Amstrad DMP), and a midi interface connected to a Yamaha keyboard. I am considering an external disk drive, I am saving for a HiQ Power - station. I am also considering a modem but I am worried about the prices. Maybe you can help me with my little problems:

1. I am very interested in becoming a PD. Librarian, but I'm not quite sure what to do i.e. where do I get the programs from - programmers or other PD. Librarian?

2. What other hardware should I get hold of to become a librarian?

3. I have read about Epics £5 disk expander, what it does and what it will do for me?

4. I have seen the OS 3.1 advertised I wondered whether this was worth me getting.

5. When the new Amiga comes out will it be possible to update?

Your mags are great I'd love to see more programs like the immortal 'Shepherd'.

J Dalley
Lancs

Dear J. Dalley,
You get programs from wherever you can, the Internet is a prime source. However you must check the copyright of every program and make sure that you can distribute it freely. There are other things that you need to be aware of. Most of the programs on the ***AUI*** *coverdisks are PD. or shareware, however you cannot send out copies of the* ***AUI*** *coverdisk as* ***AUI*** *hold the copyright on the collection of programs. There is nothing to stop you collecting the same programs and compiling your own disk. Copyright gets very complex and you do need to be careful.*

Which value added service are you going to provide, so that users will come to you rather than any of the dozens of other libraries that exist?

You will need a supply of good quality disks, packaging materials, lots more hard drive space, spare drives, spare computer, good back-up systems, completely up to date virus checkers.

I think that you have left out the word 'will' in your question! The disk expander compresses and decompresses files on the fly, and allows you to store more information on the disk. I don't really like such systems, but they do serve a useful purpose. It is always better to get more disk space.

As you are running Workbench 3 at the moment there is not much reason to upgrade. Only do so if you have an application that actually needs it.

Will it be possible to update what exactly?

The Amiga has always come in two types. The basic 'first computer' format, and an expandable model. The 1000, 2000, 3000 & 4000 are the expandable models. The A500, A600, A1200 are the 'first computer' models. You pay your money and take your choice. There are no new Amigas yet, the A1200 should be back in the shops by the time that you read this, and A4000's should also be available.

'Shepherd' give me a break, I've not got the hang of 'Pong' yet!

OTHER

Dear *AUI*,
My name is Nick and I'm from Greece. I have an A500 with 1Mb of RAM. I'm a new reader (August) and I have some questions to ask. I want to buy a CD32 not only for playing games but to use it as a computer too. Will it be 100% compatible with the A1200? How many versions of

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the SX-1 are available and which one do you think I should buy. How can I connect a 3.5 HD to a 2.5 slot? Is there any connector? If I use a HD and a disk drive with their own power supplies will there be any problem with the power of CD32? How many pounds does a SX-1 cost? Is the company closed? Can CD32 play all Amiga CDs (Aminet6 for example)? How much does an A4000 keyboard cost? And now something about the A500. I hate the 1.3 version so I can't run your disks. What should I do to upgrade my Amiga? Will it be able for me to choose which Kickstart I want to use. These were my questions, I hope you will answer me soon or my questions will never be answered.

Congratulations and please forgive my mistakes. By the way, how can I become a subscriber? Here in Greece *AUI* costs 2800drhs which means 8 pounds!!!

Nick Kalousis
Greece

Dear Nick,
The SX-1 seems to have vanished. Users have been waiting for new stocks for many months. As yet nothing has appeared. I am beginning to think that it will not reappear.

The CD32 is almost 100% compatible, but as always you will find some things that will not work. There was only one SX-1 so that is all you can buy.

The SX-1 when it was available was priced at about £190 for the bare unit. Onto that you have to add hard drive, and keyboard costs. The SX-1 was able to use a cheaper PC type keyboard costing about £30. A4000 keyboards would be at least double this.

The CD32 is a good CD ROM drive, and can quite happily read most CD-ROMs without any problems, I've use the Aminet disks in my CD32 without too many problems (apart from the lack of a keyboard that is!)

Seriously, you would be better thinking about a A1200 and a cheap CD-ROM add on unit. I doubt if the CD32 or the SX-1 will be available in any quantity in the near future.

You will need to upgrade your Amiga to the latest version available, which is 3.1. If you can find an old version 2.04 then that will help you as well. It might be cheaper! There are things called ROM switchers which allow you to select which Kickstart chip you use. I have one fitted to my A2000 to switch back to 1.2! (For one program that I very occasionally need to use) I just flip a switch and reboot from floppy and everything is fine.

There are adaptor leads to convert from 3.5 to 2.5. A good dealer should be able to get them for you.

*I am told that a yearly subscription to **AUI** for Greece costs £59. Contact the address in this **AUI** for more info.*

OTHER

Dear *AUI*,
I am writing on behalf of a friend with an A1200. He is having several problems which we would be grateful for your help with, and which I'll list by number below. First though, his set up is as follows:

A1200, Quantum Maverick 540Mb HD, Apollo 1200 40MHz 030 board with 2x 1Mb SIMMs (No FPU), Power Computing dual speed CD-ROM (connected to Apollo SCSI port), external disk drive, Amstrad monitor, Ex PC 200W power supply.

1. The drivers supplied with the Apollo board work all right, but SysInfo (3.23) will not recognise CD0: for the drive test. The mountlist is an OS2.0 type affair. Do you know of a driver which will run the CD-ROM in a more system friendly manner?

2. The Apollo board itself is quoted in the magazines as running at 9.6 MIPS. He has tested the board with SysInfo and got 7.95 MIPS. Is this just down to differing test methods, or do you think there is some thing wrong ?

3. When he tries to mount RADs they always use Chip RAM, and don't open at all when the chip ram is gone. We have tried several things to make it use Fast RAM; FastMemFirst, MCP's No Chip option, reinstalling Workbench, all to no avail. Please help we are totally stumped on this one.

4. Will this new 135Mb drive from SyQuest fit the spare 3.5" slot in my A4000 ?

5 We have looked around at A1200 and A4000 tower cases. I can't see how the manufacturers can justify the price tags of $400 plus. A tower case with supply can be bought for well under £100, so over £300 is being charged for the daughter board and modifications. Do you think we should wait around for prices to drop, or can the daughter boards be bought separately anywhere? (We asked several suppliers who told us no)

That's about it. It just remains for me to say thanks for producing such an excellent mag.

Neil Rolls
Northants

Deal Neil,
I just don't understand what you are going on about with the CD-ROM. What do you mean by a more system friendly manner? What is the problem at the moment? If it is just SysInfo that is worrying you, don't! SysInfo is expecting to see a read/write device. CDs are read only. If you want to check the transfer speed, use a big file and a stopwatch.

As you have a SCSI CD-ROM, there is a PD driver system amicdfs, I use this myself and it works as well as I could wish for.

SysInfo has another more common name which is MISS-INFO it's okay for telling you what is there but don't rely on it for anything else. Another point is that MIPS is meaningless as a benchmark. Take the shortest instruction of the chip, and divide the number of clock cycles that instruction requires into the clock frequency of the processor (in your case 50) and that will give the number of MIPS. Not a very useful number at all as the CPU may not be doing any useful work.

Look in appendix B, page 5, of your AmigaDOS manual. Check the entry for BufMemType, you will notice that 4 or 5 is needed for Fast memory use. The default is for Any memory. Modify the RAD mountlist to suit. If you really want to make use of a RAD type disk. Have a look at StatRam, it has been on a Coverdisk. It is much better than RAD: and you can have more than one.

The spare 3.5 inch bay of the 4000 is very small, I have not seen the specs of the drive, so I would err on the side of caution and say it is unlikely. The front panel access is the problem.

It is true that standard PC cases cost less than £100, but a case manufactured to spec costs a great deal more than £100. Small scale production of printed circuit boards are quite pricey, then you have to build them.

Oh - let's add testing, installation, packaging, carriage, insurance, tax, rates, water, electricity, support services, and how about paying the people who design and build the units some wages and giving the company a little profit ?

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tower cases will be, will always seem to be high, but when you add everything up it is unlikely that there is much margin in such products.

I've not see any boards being sold separately, so I think you are stuck on this one for the time being.

OTHER

Dear *AUI*,
My setup consists of an A1200, a 180mb IDE hard drive and a Citizen Swift 200c printer, My problem is this, whenever I try to compress something with Directory Opus 4 using lzx (from your coverdisk) I get out of memory errors unless I put the buffer down to 20k, even though Opus says I have 700k Free, The only other programs I have running are MultiCX, Arq and Magic Menu, with MagicWB, Also after recently installing MagicWB, I no longer get an icon on the Workbench screen for device pf0 but I do still get an icon for device ds0, The only way I can get an icon for pf0 is if add the following lines to my user-startup

Noreq ; to stop the requesters
pf0: ; to access the drive
Noreq ; to turn the requesters back on

This method does work and I do get icons, but when I boot up my floppy drive makes an awful clunking crunching noise, and don't think this is very healthy for my drive, so is there any other way to get the same result? Also when making scripts how can I use the return codes to start other things, for example if you have a menu with three options, the first with a return code of 1, the second with a return code of 2 and the last with a return code of 0, is it possible that if you select the first option it executes another script or echo's a comment, Lastly, How can I stop ed from setting the protection bit on all files I save to +sarw -hped? This is very annoying particularly for things which are often edited, such as my user-startup as I have to keep setting the d bit so that I can save over them. Brilliant cover disks but how about a batch option to decompress all the disks at once to hard drive.

Christopher Wilkinson
Tyne & Wear

Dear Christopher,
Does the compression work from the CLI? Also which buffer are you fiddling with? DOpus is known to be a bit flaky when launching some programs so this might be the root of your problem. You will have to tell me what pf0: is. This is not a standard drive name at all. Is it a hard drive partition? If so check the automount tickbox with HDtoolbox that might have been upset. Otherwise chuck out MagicWB, it does not really serve any useful purpose except eat memory.

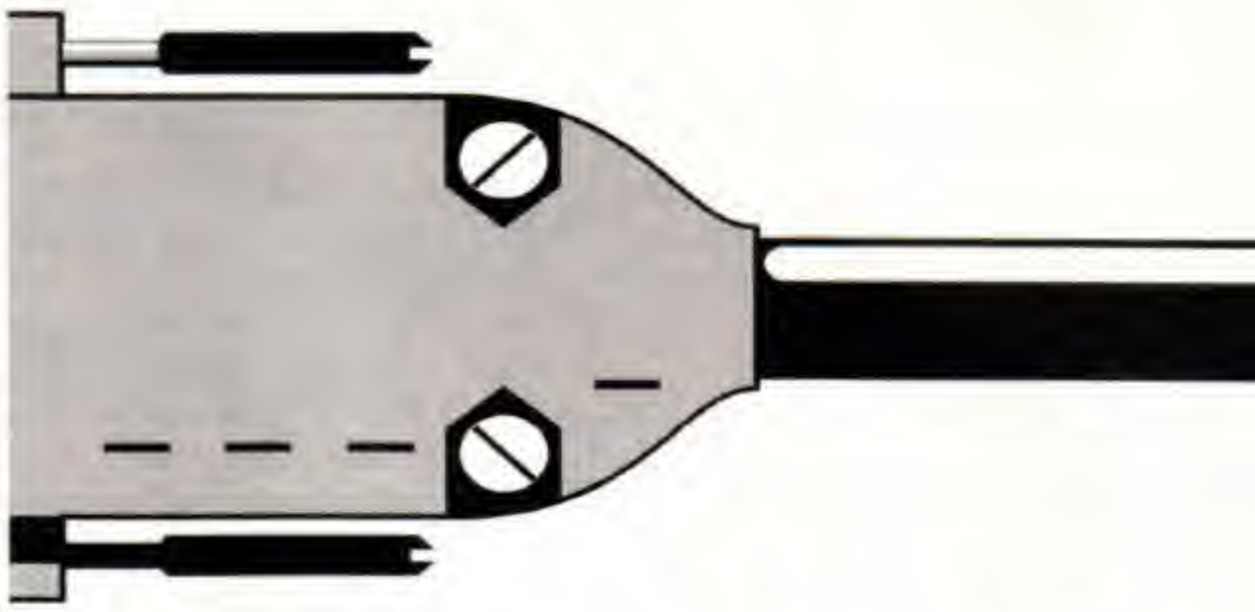
Don't worry about the drive, it is quite normal for them to clunk about a bit. However if this has only recently started doing this then have a look at it. Another method is to pop a formatted but non installed disk in the drive that will keep it quiet. ED does not alter the protection bits of the file being edited, it just clones what is there. I expect that something else is setting the protection bit.

*Creating menus is a little tricky using the shell. Take a look at how the **AUI** coverdisks scripts work. A simple method is to create a series of script files caller 1,2,3 ... and then type a simple message saying press 1 for function 1, 2 for function 2 etc. if you set the script bit on each of the files 1,2,... then they will be automatically executed.*

As for the unbatching I'll make sure that your suggestion is passed on. However, as not everybody will want every program it might be better to leave things as they are. The script is nice and stable now and I would not like to see a load of queries relating to unarchiving disks. Why not install diskspare and copy the archives to a test directory and just unarc them? That's what I do and it works without any problems.

OTHER

Dear *AUI*,
I have been reading your magazine for the last few months and I must say that I have been pleasantly surprised. That said I have noticed the odd cockup;



half a printer article! Still I suppose it does add character, smirk! By the way, who did get the prize?

Anyway to the point of this letter, in my quest for absolute understanding I have prepared a list of questions. I will be grateful for any response, useful or otherwise. As a bribe, and if my student grant will stretch to it, I'll offer to take out a subscription. Unless you would like to offer me one for free !

1) I have an A1500 with WB3.1, is it possible to directly connect a 15" SVGA monitor? Who says size isn't everything!

2) Given that time is a dimension of space and space consists of matter and energy would it not be possible to create an area of timelessness by creating a dimensional interweave to bypass the positive and negative matter/energy streams of past and future avoiding the now? If so by varying the feedback, or feed forward depending on your point of view, of the above stated matter/energy streams would not time travel be possible?

3) I recently purchased a second hand GVP 030 40 MHz accelerator, do you know where I can obtain a manual? I have 2 Mb of 16 bit memory on a GVP HD Controller, can this and the hard disk be moved to the accelerator? Will this increase the machines performance? Will I have to alter any of the jumpers?

4) If timelessness was induced in an object, by bypassing the energy/matter streams, how would that object be prevented from decomposing if the energy and matter required to support it were no longer available?

5) As I only have a standard Philips 88.33 MKII monitor Is there any point fitting a Picasso RTG

Board to my machine? I thank you for your time and ask you to get a move on with the next issue.

Chris Webb
Southampton

Dear Chris,
No, you cannot directly connect an SVGA monitor. You would need some form of scan rate convertor.

The Microway flicker fixer is one such example. They have been out of production for a long time, and are like gold dust to find.

Your questions about the nature of time, space and matter are best answered by the theories and predictions of Heinrich Reissner and Gunner Nordstrom who in 1916 and 1918 produced some papers on the self gravitation of electric fields which built on Einstein's work a year or so before. If you are interested in the subject I can recommend a general introduction to the subject of time and time travel in the book:

'In Search of the Edge of Time' by John Gribbin ISBN 0-552-99462-6. Another very well known book by John Gribbin is 'In search of Schrodingers Cat', also highly recommended if you want to understand a little bit more about quantum theory.

The best place to get the manual from is the person from whom you bought the item. Don't buy complex equipment without handbooks. I don't have detailed information on every third party board. The best you could do is contact Power Computing and see if they can help.

Neither matter nor energy can be destroyed, only converted into one another, also without any plane

of reference you cannot tell what state an object would end up in. This is defiantly the field of quantum mechanics, see the aforementioned reference.

You will need a multisync monitor of some sort to be able to make effective use of the Picasso.

OTHER

Dear *AUI*
My current system is :- Amiga 1500, 1Mb RAM, two printers (Canon BJ10ex and Star LC-10 Colour) and Sony TV/Montior.

What would you do if you didn't know whether to buy OS 3.1 or EGS Spectrum or not? That's the decision I'm trying to make at the moment, I just don't know which way to go. So if you were in my position, what would you do?

New Amiga suggestions:

Five or six Amigas aren't going take over 20-30 PCs worldwide, so why don't some Amigas become part of the PC range. This means that they are an original Amiga + a PC in one for maybe half the price of a PC computer. The machines can incorporate PC ports, a PC mouse, joysticK, MS-DQS 6.0, MS-Windows 95, Amiga ports, an Amiga mouse, joystick, Amiga OS 3.1 and Workbench 3.1. If that were sold for half the price of the cheapest PC, I think Commodore-Escom would get loads of customers.

For Amigas that were bought before Commodore were, there could be plug in modules for the A500, A500+, A600 and A1200 which will have PC ports on it, and allow standard PC cards to be plugged into the Amiga, all powered from an external PSU. All Amigas that are 1500s and above could have internal modules, and could come with power supplies to the Amiga with power to run itself and the module. With the new A1200s could come these plug-in modules. All new Amigas that are made to be expandable could then have sockets or slots to plug in PC cards, and power supplies which pack more power in than usual.

Questions:

Why wasn't Commodore's saga reported on British TV News? Will all Amiga software run on the new A1200s? Does OS 3.1 allow you to run Windows program on Workbench? Does it allow more software to run on your Amiga than Workbench . 2? Does the Amiga 1500 have an SCSI port, allowing a CD-ROM drive to be plugged into it?

I've been looking in all your advertisements for computer companies in your magazine, but haven't found one which stocks Fast RAM for the A1500? The reason is because I want to upgrade my existing 1Mb to something like 3 or 4Mb. Could you please tell me if you know any computer companies who do sell Fast RAM for the A1500.? One of the upgrades I am also thinking about is OS 3.1. If my machine did have OS 3.1, would I have to use special software in order to run older software.?

Tony Hall
Gloucester

Dear Tony,
OS 3.1 or ECS, well, I can't tell you. You have not told me what you are running at the moment. If you are running OS1.3 then you should upgrade. If you are running OS2.xx then the benefits are more marginal. In that particular case I would only upgrade if a particular critical application needed 3.1.

You strike me as wanting something for nothing. How can you put two computers in one box, and then sell them at half the price of the cheapest PC? Note that the PC market is cut-throat in the extreme, with £400 buying you a base system. How can anyone build the equivalent of two computers for £200.

There are two Amiga systems, and this is where I start to upset a few people. The low end Amigas, A500, 600, 1200 are NOT designed to be expanded to any significant degree. The fact that there are so many add-on units is testimony to the original design being so flexible. If users want to expand their systems they should have bought the 2000,3000 or 4000 machines, which are des-igned for the job. It is not a simple matter of 'plug in modules' as you put it. The big box Amigas do come with the ability to plug in PC cards via systems such as the bridgeboards, and golden gate systems.

The demise of Commodore was not newsworthy. This is a sad reflection on the quality of news broadcasting in the UK, where endless boring reports of wars and the latest exploits of brain dead idiot soap actors/actresses and pop music performers are deemed to be far more newsworthy.

Even local news is pushed to the tail end of broadcasts. Try to think when was the last time a shuttle mission synopsis was given on the news. Complain to the broadcasters about this.

You have used the term will ALL Amiga software work on the new A1200. The new A1200 is exactly the same as the old A1200. At this moment there have been no design changes. Software has broken on every Amiga upgrade, so the short answer is no, not all software will work on all Amigas.

Windows is a Microsoft PC product, code written for Windows is intended to be run on the Intel processors. They will not run on the 680x0 processors that the Amiga uses. There are two exceptions. You can install a bridgeboard and run Windows on that, or you can use a software emulator. Only the first option is viable for continuous use. The emulators are useful for occasional work, but are not really suitable for general use.

The A2000 does not have a SCSI port as standard (the 1500 is a 2000) however there are many plug in boards that provide this function. Quite often these boards provide memory expansion capabilities as well. The Commodore product was the 2091.

You will not see specific adverts for the A2000 memory expansion, but if you ask for Zorro memory expansion cards Amiga specialists will understand what you want. As I have already mentioned, if you get a SCSI card, it is likely that this will have memory expansion as well. All Zorro memory is 'fast' RAM. ***AUI***

When writing to Amiga Answers please include as much information as possible about your system and about the software/hardware you are running. This will help determine what your problem might be and its solution!
Send your questions to:

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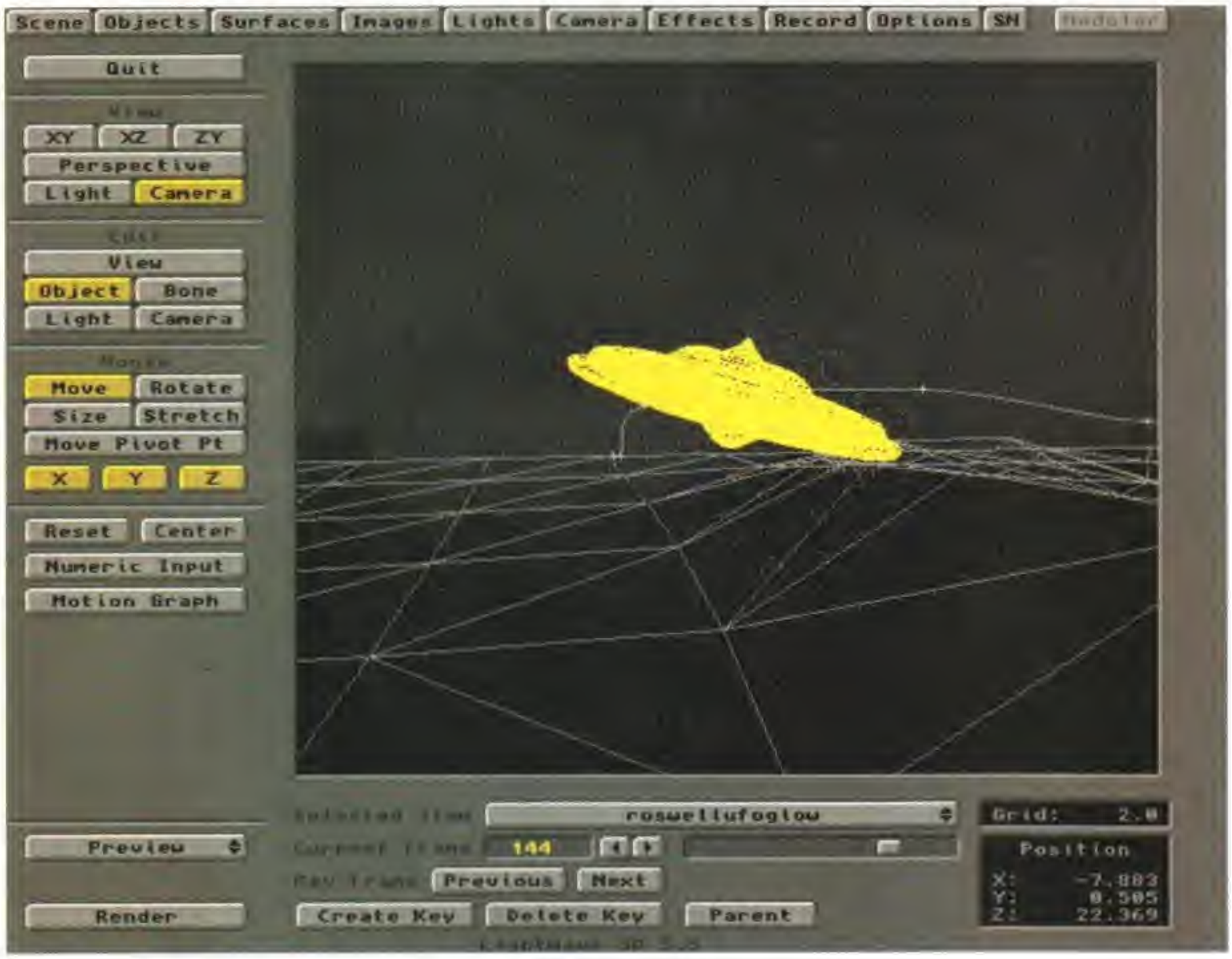
TIPS FOR 3D GRA



Recently I decided that it was time to produce a 3D sequence to show off what I could do with my system. Something to send out to potential clients to pull a bit of work in. Not that I hadn't been using my trusty A4000 on pro jobs anyway, but when you are fulfilling clients' needs you are not necessarily producing stuff that you would want to put on a showreel. A bit of plain chromium lettering rotating around your client's logo may be the answer to his dreams, but it's hardly thrilling stuff. So there comes a time when you decide to put a little something together to catch the eye of other clients who'll say "Hey, that's great!", and then commission you to do some chromium lettering going round their logos as well. Such is life. Don't knock it. It pays the bills and I'll let you into a secret. I love doing it all - yes, even the chromium lettering.

Due to time and memory constraints I wanted to avoid having too many polygons in the scene, so the central object needed to be relatively simple. On the other hand, in choosing a theme for my sequence, I needed something I could use to show off textures, lens flares, and particle blur. I felt that these are the main strengths of the package I use and that they should be shown off. (No

Wil Mobberley shares some of his favourite tricks with us while he creates an incident.

APHICS ARTISTS

prizes for guessing which one.) In order to catch the eye I decided to go for something topical - the Roswell UFO crash.

The rumours were rife. An illicit copy of film purporting to be of the alleged alien autopsy following the fabled 1947 UFO crash near Roswell, in New Mexico, had surfaced and would be screened across the globe. Therefore lots of people would be talking about it, and my showreel swimming around in the midst of all that wouldn't do me any harm at all. A crashing UFO is ideal material because everybody likes watching them and, although flying saucer anims are among the easiest to produce, they're among the hardest to do well. If people like what they see, your work will stand out among rival offerings with similar subject matter. As with all graphic work, be it 2D, 3D, or whatever, attention to detail is the all important factor.

I won't bore you with in-depth detail about how I sketched out a saucer profile and then lathed it. The chances are that's just about the first thing YOU did to try out the lathe function when you bought your 3D program (Unless you're a girl, in which case you probably did a vase teachers.)

I'll share with you some of my favourite tricks which I have found make a big difference to 3D renders and I'll show you what a transformation took place with my saucer sequence.

More Realistic

I find that my renders almost always look too clean so to make them more true to life I use a misty cloud image overlay of about 90 percent transparent or more. This has several advantages. For starters it renders quicker than using a fog procedure. Secondly, the anti-aliasing passes are not so complex because everything has been knocked back a little. And thirdly, the colour saturation appears to be altered, but the effect is better than if you just render without colour saturation at less than 100%. I don't know why. Experimentation is the order of the day.

There is a drawback in that occasionally one does see the static texture. This is why it is preferable to use

TIPS FOR 3D GRAPHICS ARTISTS – *CONTINUED*

a sequence of misty images. In an ideal world I'd use a combination of image overlay and the fog operator to get a real sense of the saucer coming out of the mist. Unless you have a DEC Alpha, or a Raptor however, or your client doesn't want the work until well into next year, some of the complex rendering options are not a realistic option.

Have a look at the first set of pictures. They were my first attempt. Observers complemented me on the reflective saucer hull and were impressed by the use of photographic backdrops, but only because they had no idea how easy these things are. (That's a good tip actually, use photographs for textures a lot. They look good and clients think it's hard to do!) I was lucky in that where my texture map overlapped it gave the appearance of a dirt track. So I was happy to leave it be. Usually I'd expect a lot more juggling to get it right.

For all that I was still disappointed. I knew that there was something missing. I'd used particle blur for some sparks as the craft hit the ridge and put in some red point lights to give a hot look at the right moment. These elements worked well enough, but somehow the whole thing still looked bland.

The ground did not really look convincing, but then modelled ground rarely does. Floor boards are easy and look realistic. The great outdoors is always problematical. That's why special effects companies tend to use real film, say a helicopter shot, and add computer generated elements to it. This wasn't an option open to me.

I thought about adding some trees to break things up a bit, but the Roswell crash was supposed to have been a desert incident and I didn't want to draw attention away from the central element - the saucer itself. I wanted prospective clients to be looking at the reflectivity of the saucer, not noticing how unrealistic the trees passing by were. So I decided to go for mood.

I loaded the texture maps into an image processing package and altered the balance. I made them darker and bluer. Then, turning my attention to the lights in the layout, I took down their ambient levels to around 5% to give me greater shadow effects. This would mean that my red explosion lights would create a more dramatic contrast too. Rendering a few test frames of this showed a marked improvement. Yet I wanted to add just that little something extra.

More flare

I couldn't resist it. I had to put in one hell of a lens flare. Now I'll freely admit that I'm as guilty as the next man when it comes to overdoing lens flares and I know they have a lot more impact if used sparingly, but since this was destined to be a showreel sequence I wanted that flare to be very noticeable - especially as some of the industry standard packages can't do them. Ha Ha!

Have a look at the revised versions of my frames. Apart from colour correcting the background and texture map images, only the lighting has changed. In fact the colour correction was nothing more than a way of faking a lighting change in the background, so it's true to say that the way the scene is lit is the ONLY change. As you can see, it makes all the difference.

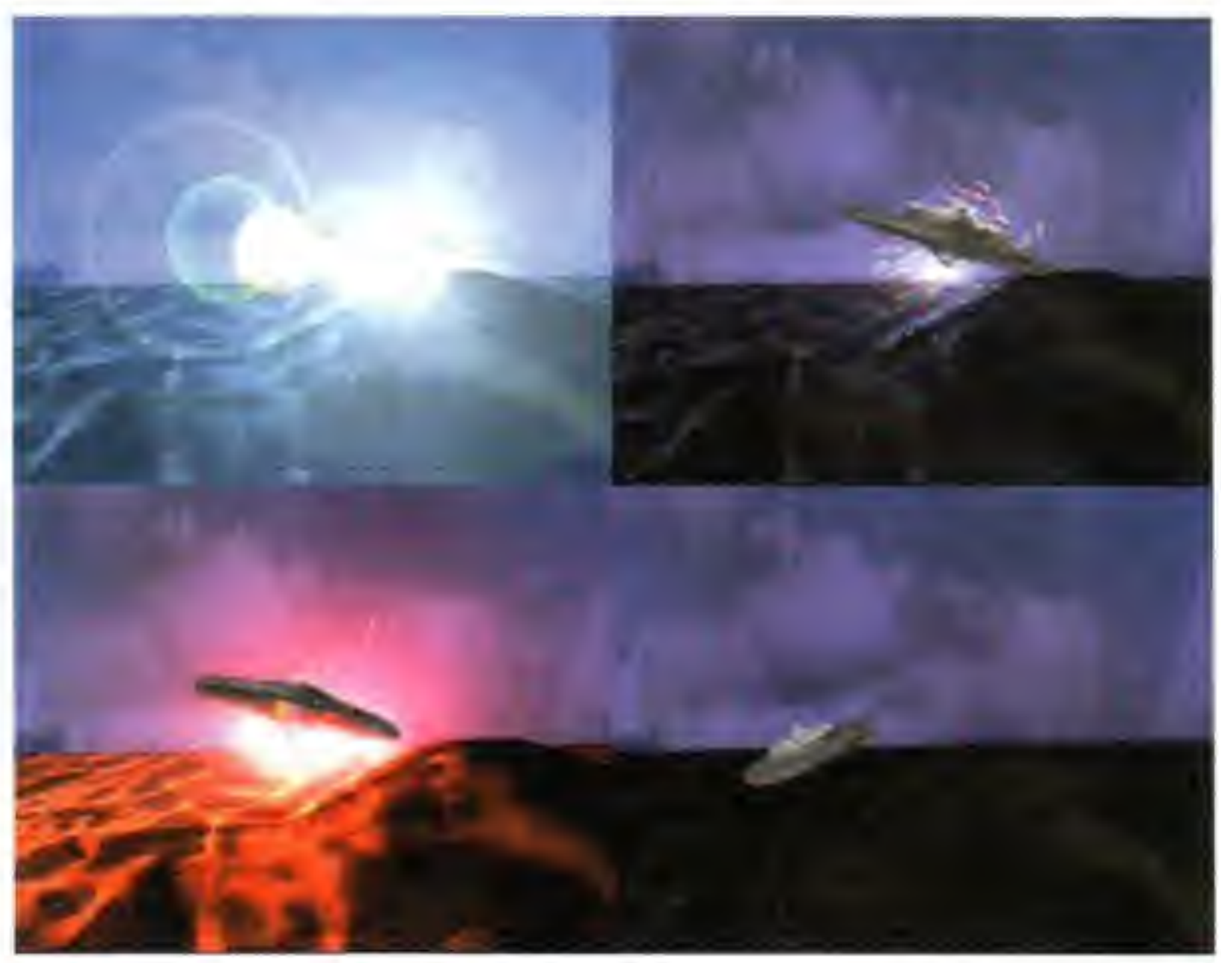
Since the Roswell saucer was rumoured to have been struck by lightning I decided to do this as well. You can see from the example frames that I used particle blur again, this time to suggest fragments flying off immediately after the lightning strike.

The flash itself wasn't done in the 3D package at all. It's a hand drawn line, anti-aliased of course, and one or two of the frames paid a visit to the image processor to be lightened. The result gives added oomph to the bolt.

I still used my misty cloud overlay, but this time I made the saucer very slightly transparent as well. This fools the viewer into thinking that the saucer is passing through cloud layers and only works because the background is exclusively sky. (You would-not be very impressed if you could see a building through the saucer, would you?)

The final sequence was rendered to Betacam SP and that master was then used to run off a load of VHS† showreels to send out. And yes, it paid off, because in this business nobody will believe you if you say you can do something. You have to have an example on tape to prove it. The best advice to give to anyone who wishes to get into the business still hasn't changed: the showreel is ALL.

By the way, did you get to see that alien autopsy footage? It's amazing what you can do with latex, isn't it? ***AUI***



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Gods Almighty

Playing God...It's a feeling that most people get only rarely. That power, that omnipotence, makes the creative act into a thrill. But since computers, that priviliged feeling has been within the reach of us all. Remember the game of Life? Ashley Cotter-Cairns does as he enters the heavenly realm of God games and considers the pick of the paradisical power plays. Deus Irae!

What makes the Godgame experience such a special one? To the uninitiated - or perhaps that should be unordained - a Godgame is a confusing, tangled, array of menus and options, levels within levels. Once familiar with the genre, though, all of these mechanics fall away, leaving the player more or less free to vent his or her creativity within the game world provided.

Most Godgames put you in charge of a race of people. Hence the association with deities. But what's special is the sense of responsibility this imparts. If you don't pay the Fire and Police Departments, your city is at the mercy of infernos and organized crime. Ignore the advancing knights and you castles will be set ablaze. Forget to repair the bridge and the 12:15 to New Orleans will plunge into the Mississippi.

A look at Godgames, with ecclesiastical ratings, by Ashley Cotter-Cairns.

Most Godgames present the player with a challenge utterly unlike real life. You can play at being Richard Branson, Attilla the Hun, or Henry Ford. One friend of mine, deep in a session of Railroad Tycoon, remarked to me: "Wouldn't it be cool to do this for real, just sit here with a mouse and run other people's lives?"

The Godgame is also a phenomenon unique to computer and video games. Anyone who wanted to enough could go out and hunt something, hire a racing car, become proficient in a martial art, or even role play in a real cave environment. almost any fantasy in any type of game can be emulated, more or less completely as in Godgames.

Each time you play again, the game will be different. That is another unique feature of the genre. you cannot predict what will happen from game to game and situation to situation. This keeps the challenge fresh and enthralling. And part of the fun is doing things wrong on purpose. slap down a nuclear reactor next to a busy residential area and watch the people evacuate. Joy.

The other thing which all Godgames have in common is their longevity. Few are possible to complete within days: the best keep players hooked for weeks of gaming time on end. And yes, I'm speaking from experience. They are certainly not everybody's cup of herbal tea. Becoming proficient at Godgames implies a high level of intelligence and good powers of reasoning, strategic thought, and usually fiscal management. Surprisingly perhaps, these skills must be blended with quick reactions: often you'll need to select the right command and implement it fast to head off an impending disaster.

So being a God isn't easy. But it's a lot of fun.

Thank God

"We are all lying in the gutter, but some of us are looking at the stars." - Oscar Wilde

First there was darkness. Then there was I. God. The big man. Though I didn't much like the dark.

"Let there be light," I boomed, in a tone and volume intended to impress all but Napalm Death fans.

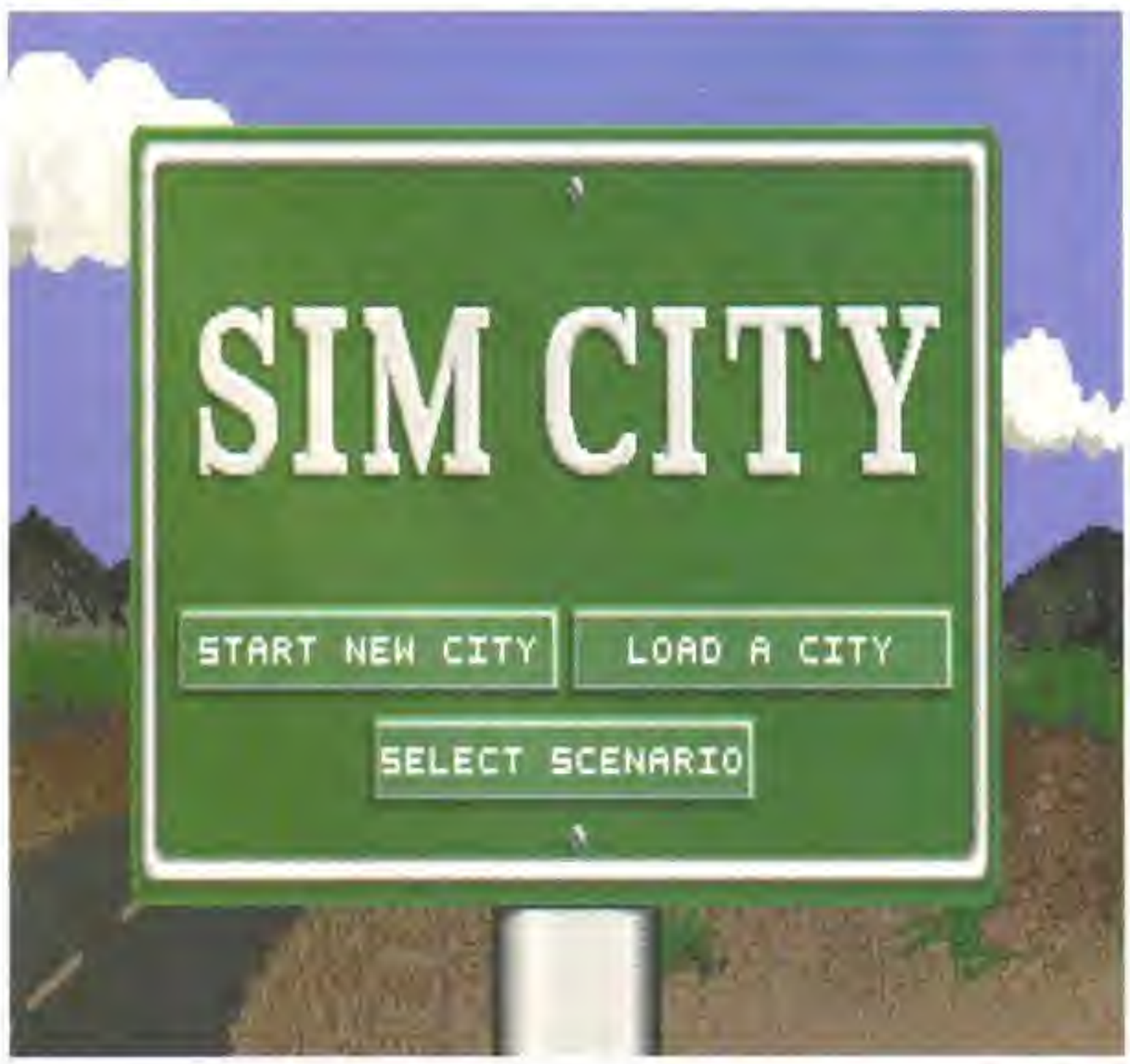
"Er, sorry, God," said one of my disciples, "but Godzilla's wrecked the downtown area and the power supply's failed. We hope to get things back in order by Tuesday - Wednesday, tops."

Hot in the City

Sim City - Maxis/Infogrammes - £29.99 (with Populous)

The phenomenon known as the Godgame began in the earliest days of the Amiga, when a little-known company called Maxis released Sim City. Sim City was, as its name suggested, a model of a metropolis, which cast the player in the role of the Mayor of his chosen town. Mayors these days have life pretty easy - wearing big gold necklaces and having three hour lunches - but not so the Mayor of Sim City.

You had to set the tax rate, supervise the building of roads, power stations and railways, arrange police and fire department protection, build enough residential, commercial and industrial property to meet demand and, most fun of all, cope with disasters as and when they occured. These ranged from air crashes to monster attacks (really) and each caused utter mayhem in the city you called your own. Information was always available if you wanted to find out how (un)popular you were with your citizens and how much of your limited funds were available to spend on keeping people quiet.



Now if all this sounds like loads of fun, it was. Even if Sim City is pretty crude graphically by today's standards, at the time graphics were second-best to a decent, gripping game. Coming back to it after all this time is like meeting your old girlfriend from high school - fun for a brief fling all over again, but unlikely to be a lifelong companion. Tastes are influenced by experience and God Games have come on a long way since Sim City kept me up at nights (or my old girlfriend, for that matter).

RATING: Aged Witch Doctor

Pop Life

Populous - Bullfrog/Infogrammes - £29.99 (with Sim City)

Just a little time after Sim City was wowing gamesplayers everywhere, Bullfrog, then a small development company, released Populous. Perhaps most deserving of the title Godgame, in Populous you played the creator of a race of little people, who had declared war on a neighbouring tribe of evil, but otherwise very similar little people.

Your little people were faithful but aimless if unaided, so your job was to build up their forces and unleash them on the enemy. This was done by flattening land, which upgraded the dwellings of your people from tiny huts to vast castles. More people can reproduce from castles than huts, so you got more people to settle, more dwellings to upgrade, so more people and so on.

In return for your efforts, each living person generated an amount of magical power, which you could draw on to use for big magic spells. These included earthquakes, floods, swamps and mountains (making flatlands almost impossible to create) and spells to create Knights (elite soldiers which burn and pillage at every opportunity). The final showdown between the races occured when one God had enough power to force the other to a duel between single Knights. All the people then piled into one being and there was a scrap to the death between the two super-Knights.

Populous is still fun to play for a while and is an interesting trip down memory lane. You may grow tired of it long before conquering the 1,000 lands, but the best fun is had by linking two Amigas via modem or RS232. Then you can send rude messages across before blitzing your human enemy with an earthquake.

RATING: Parish Priest

Settle Down Now

The Settlers - Blue Byte - £34.95

It's amazing how much fun village life can be. When you're a God, of course. Life for the villagers themselves is simple and probably dull. Village people can take up many professions, from butcher weapons maker, via pig farmer, miner and woodcutter. The village itself is a wonderful place (once you've built it) and many happy hours can be spent just watching the world you control do its own thing.

Centre the screen on an area and the sounds associated with the industries there surround you: pigs snort as they roll in the mud, the clash of steel on steel echoes from the depths of the blacksmith's shop, axe falls on tree with a realistic thunk. As you watch, the people wander to and fro along the paths you've built for them, leaving supplies and finished articles waiting to be picked up at junctions.

With all of this engrossing entertainment on hand, it's easy to forget that there is a purpose to The Settlers. You have to take a majority of the land, pushing your boundaries back by aggressively taking it from the opposition with your soldiers. It's a bit like a more primitive version of the problems in the old Yugoslavia: people fighting over land that they could happily share. And if there's any downside to this terrific Godgame, it's that the two tribes can't settle together in perfect harmony.

RATING: The Bishop of Durham

Nice 'n Spicy

Dune 2 - Virgin - £34.95

Dune 2 is based on the planet of Arrakis, which is a natural source of a rare spice which preserves life for hundreds of years. This spice has to be harvested from the sand which makes up 95% of the planet's surface. Your task, playing the peaceful Atriedes, the neutral Ordos or the evil Harkonnen, is to maintain overall control of the planet. This, despite your race's inclination, is usually achieved by blowing the other two houses into smithereens.

The idea is to build up a base for your spice harvesting. Once the spice is collected it can be converted into credits, to spend on beefing up your defensive and offensive capabilities. Tanks, trikes and foot soldiers are all available at the start of the game, but as the going gets tougher, you'll need bigger and better artillery to live long and prosper. New buildings and weapons can be developed, until the final mission, when much of the negotiating between houses is done with long range missiles and awesome machines of death and destruction.

The graphics are small but detailed and sound consists of some annoying samples and a spooky soundtrack. But what makes Dune 2 a winner is the gameplay. It's very engrossing, with lots of extra features that keep cropping up each time you play. My only criticism is that it's too easy to complete - although there are about 25 areas on the map, you only have to clear eight or nine before the final conflict. Good players can expect to complete it, with each different house, before too long. Otherwise, brilliant.

RATING: The Archbishop of Canterbury

Gods Almighty

CONTINUED

On The Right Track

Railroad Tycoon
MicroProse - £14.95

The name Sid Meier will be well known to fans of MicroProse's Godgames Civilisation and Railroad Tycoon. I defend the decision to feature Railroad instead of Civilisation, because the latter is a heavier, more wargame-like offering, while Railroad is more easy to get into and enjoyable for a wider audience.

Starting in one of four areas and times, from the early 19th century to 1900, you have 100 years to make your railroad a star performer, not only popular with the customers but also with the shareholders. For you have to survive in the stockmarket as well, where your company is vulnerable (in a cut-throat market) to being taken over by another in a share buyout. Thus you must ensure when borrowing cash and selling shares that you don't leave yourself open to a hostile bid for your outstanding shares.

Up to 32 trains can run on your network at once, with the problems of collisions, bridges washed out by flood waters and aggressive building plans from the competing railroads hampering your progress. At each station you build, a certain amount of demand will be generated for railroad services. You have to fulfil these by supplying trains of the correct type and frequency. Your rates for transporting goods, passengers and mail depends on how quickly they arrive at their destination and other factors, like how much competition there is with other networks.

Graphics and sound are simple but effective, but you'll hardly notice these once your trains start

a'running. The fact is that Railroad Tycoon is dangerously addictive. It's deceptively simple to begin with but, when you've a dozen stations all crying out for supply, a bridge has gone down in the middle of your network and some other tycoon is buying your shares like there's no tomorrow, you'll feel like the world has dumped its woes on your doorstep. And you'll still be loving it. A budget bargain.

RATING: The Baby-Eating Bishop of Bath and Wells

All's Fair

Theme Park - Bullfrog - £34.95

If you've ever wanted to build and run your very own amusement wonderland - perhaps inspired by the fantastic losses of Eurodisney (maybe you even invested in some shares at £9 each...) - then Theme Park is the game of your dreams. Available only for 32-bit Amigas, Theme Park has a similar structure to Sim City. Starting with a greenfield site and a limited bank balance, you have to build your own theme park and make it a successful business.

As well as rides, which can be made as big, exciting and daredevil as you can afford (but there are

safety penalties for being overzealous with your rollercoasters or cranking up the power on the roundabouts), you have to hire and fire staff to keep the kiddies amused and the park free of litter and yobs, open refreshment stands and still make the books balance at the end of the month.

Each child in the park can be clicked on to find out how much money he has, whether he's happy, bored or nauseous and what he most wants to do. These will give you clues as to how well you're doing. In the meantime, you have to keep a weather eye on your computer-controlled competition, with the overall intention of becoming the world's most successful theme park baron fixed in the back of your mind.

Theme Park is a triumph for Bull- frog. It shows just what can be done when a brilliantly conceived idea gets the right treatment. Gra-phics and sound are superb and the game is thoroughly addictive.

RATING: The Pope

OTHER GODS, OTHER GAMES.

While the games above are the cream of the crop, there are plenty of other Godgames around if your appetite has been whetted. This is by no means a complete list, but here are the highlights.

Airbucks - *Impressions* - £34.95 – Emulate Richard Branson by setting up and running your own airline.

Civilisation - *MicroProse* - £29.99 – Detailed, engrossing and brilliant, lead your nation through the ages and into space before anyone else beats you to it. Not recommended for apprentice Gods.

Detroit - *Impressions* - £34.95 – Another great concept. If you think Henry Ford should have sold the Model T in neon pink, try running your own car company.

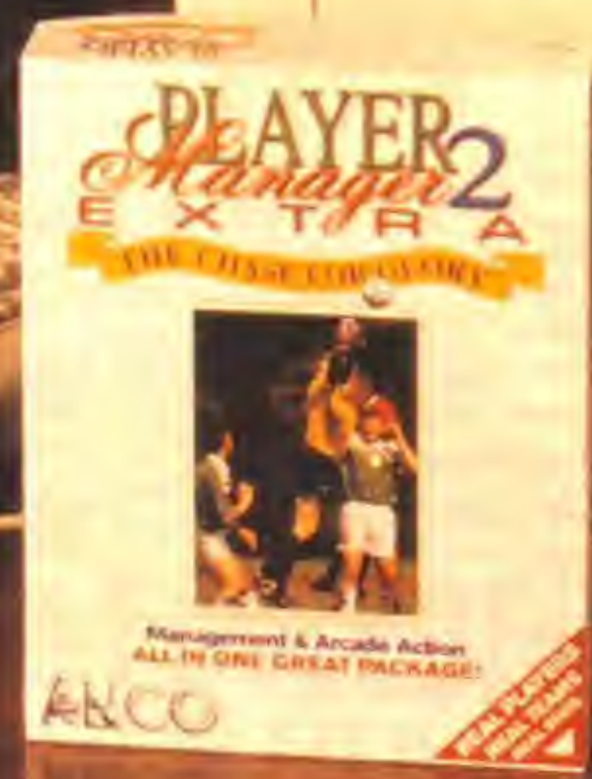
Populous II - *Bullfrog* - N/A – More spells, more lands to conquer, more fun to be had.

Sim City 2000 - *Maxis* - £34.99 – A great sequel to the granddaddy of them all. You now are in charge of more stuff, like the water supply - and there are loads of new 3D disasters to enjoy...

Sim Tower - *Maxis* - N/A – A new twist to the Sim theme sees a race living in a high rise block that is rising higher bit by bit. Not available for the Amiga currently.

Transport Tycoon - *MicroProse* - N/A – Not yet available for the Amiga (take note 'Prose), this brilliant sequel is set in the future and is hooking PC owners everywhere. ***AUI***

TIME ON YOUR HANDS..?



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TEAM

It's a game of two halves guv'nor. You've gotta give 110% for the full 90 minutes. I'm over the moon and as sick as a parrot.

TEAM Impact Software £TBA

When Team loads up, you are greeted with a title page which is laid out in an somewhat uninspiring fashion. The font itself looks in need of substitution. It's a pity that more trouble wasn't taken with menus etc. because that often helps set the tone for the whole game and the player's first impressions.

Team Experience in Team

In Team, there are league and cup competitions, or you can play a friendly. This is by far the best way to start playing Team: you can see how it works without having to slog your way through several menus. Select one team for yourself and another for the computer or a friend and you'll see the players trotting out onto the pitch.

These chaps might look a tad familiar. I think that they resemble the figures in Sensible Soccer, though they aren't as smooth or as detailed as their possible source of inspiration. They are smaller and somehow more frail looking and lack the loveable animated antics of the Sensible players, but perhaps that is intentional.

There is a ref who bumbles around and sometimes gets in the way of the players (nice touch). The crowd dons scarves in the colours of their chosen team and moves about as play unfolds.

There are other things in common with Sensible Soccer. You tap the fire button to pass and hold it down to shoot. Lift and bend can be applied to the ball if desired, which works quite well.

The graphics are acceptable, though not outstandingly brilliant. My impression is that the players do not always control the ball accurately and sometimes seem to let it bobble away from them - at least they did from me, when I played the computer and lost by 20 - nil!!.

Of course, the computer teams play marvellously, which may not be encouraging to new players. In Team's defence, this happens with all computer footie games, but with practice the games generally become worthwhile. It's usually the lack of familiarity with a new control method that's the cause of the problems.

Sound in Team is limited to a few moans and groans, cheers after goalmouth incidents, and the noise of boot on ball. During dribbling, the match becomes eerily silent and there could have been some crowd noises to add extra reality

There are a number of positive features about Team. A comprehensive options menu allows for the pitch type, wind and even referee strictness to be altered, which are good ideas, while players who score a goal do a muted celebration which is lively and entertaining and the ref himself is actually quite nicely animated.

Team, like many football games, aspires to the best in footie entertainments which for me, and I know I'm a fanatic, is the heights of Sensible Soccer. This is no bad ambition. However, genius in programming is as rare as gentlemanliness on the football field, and the Sensible Software mob have set a standard that in my very partial view is almost impossible for anyone else to reach.

It's not surprising therefore that Team, among a Wembley Stadium-full of soccer games, can't equal that. And doubtless Team's programmer's would say they weren't trying to, they were trying to create their own individual soccer game and their efforts were aimed to all that implies. Effort has certainly been put into Team, especially into the graphics, but we can't judge a game on effort alone. As in soccer, in computer games it's results that count and, in my view, the result that has been achieved with Team still leaves something to be achieved. ***AUI***

VERDICT

Graphics:	65%
Sound:	42%
Gameplay:	36%
Overall:	50%

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Howdy to all Amiga users!!!!

Well, what a lovely day it is for reading a long but interesting PD ad! You'll notice that our ads aren't the intensely and mind numbingly boring lists of PD titles, which in our minds, mean nothing anyway. Let's start off with a few simple facts shall we, V12-PD is run by Amiga freaks, I'm not just saying that, it's true! Want proof? Ok, we have 19 Amigas, yes, 19, all of which are used each and every day in the running of V12-PD. Now who else can boast such a broadside of the world's best computers? No one, else, even the largest companies don't have as many as us. Need more proof? What about our prices? We sell disks cheaper than any other library in this or any other magazine, just check any of the other libraries, none of them comes within a mile of our prices, which are:

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But the main thing we have over the competition is our approach to PD. We are friendly, funny, and there's no chance you'll be baffled by business types because we don't work that way (we don't work at all, erm, carry on!). Our catdisk is humorous, it's not the boring rubbish you see from everyone else, the sort of thing you read and then go around talking like Nigel Mansell for weeks, oh no, our catdisk is so cool. We are true Amiga freaks, we now what people look for in software because we are looking for it too. Check out the new commercial game we stock, sword of honour, it is a brilliant Ninja beat em up arcade adventure, released only a few months ago and received many good reviews. This is being retailed by us at the outrageous price of £14.99, yes, practically budget price for a brand new game! We have a PD demo disk of the game, so you can try before you buy!

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Because we have more titles than all the other competition there is a much better freedom of choice for everyone, we have more of everything than anyone else, and all of the titles the competition stock too, so why ain't you at our party? Our service range is also totally out of the league of all other suppliers, we have equipment that they can only dream about, sampling at up to and beyond CD quality, digitizing in true 24-bit, and now scanning to in 24 bit in any resolution you want (do you know how much scanning hardware costs that allows this level of resolution? If you have a weak heart, I won't tell you!). Just ring and ask about anything we offer, we won't lie to you, honest, we can answer the phone when it rings from 10am until 7pm 6 days a week (we spend all Sunday praying, oh what little cherubs we are!) We aren't part time jockeys, full time professionals, with the full time service you can expect.

Still not convinced! Right, we'll have to resort to torture then, pass the ear waggler someone! Naah, only kidding (or was I?) Our catdisk is the coup de grace, as we said earlier (about a year ago in reading time!) It is humorous, well presented and very easy to use. It auto detects workbench versions and adjusts itself accordingly so there's no compatibility worries, you can install all files to ram for a super speedy catdisk (100k crunched files in under a second!), or install utils for about 20% increase in speed. There's always free PD on it, it's two disks of joy and happiness! Music, animation, art, commercial games list at ridiculous prices (no need for piracy anymore!), like 3 quid for boxed originals of this year! We challenge any other PD library to put their catdisk up against ours and not be embarrassed.

So what have you got to lose? Our disks are all guaranteed, all we ask is you trust us. How do you get our two mystical lurve machine catdisks? It's dead easy, just send 3 first class tamps or 75p to our address above with your name, address, national insurance number, prison number, finger prints, at least 86 forms of identification, 14 photos, and a British Rail sandwich (we prefer cheese). Ok, just kidding, send your name and address with 3 first class stamps and we'll send you our 2 disk catalogue with free PD and details of all our services, membership schemes, all in a lurvely little jiffy that you can give grandad to keep his 'baccy in afterwards! What more can we say? Look at it this way, would you rather spend 5 quid on PD and get 10 disks or 5? It's up to you but I know what I'd do (go down the pub with it!).

A special hello to all our friend-I-poops in the Amiga industry, including Rob Daviau and family in Canada (Hi Rob!), Stefan Mansier in Holland, Freak of NFA, aid Birch, Neil Painter (talk to me man!) and everyone else. Also hi to Tony Hickman at Amiga Format, please ring us more often, 3 times a day just isn't enough! Hi Mum!

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Pinball Puffers

David Ward tackles the gradients on Alternative Software's new Pinball Simulator for players from kids to wrinklies.

So far most TV or movie tie-in games have had some sort of plot that links with the inspirational material. Thomas the tank engine & friends pinball does not. If ever there was a blatant piece of marketing, then this is it. Take four pinball table simulations and give them TV character backdrops and theme tunes to draw in the little kiddies.

And why not. This software is going to sell well as it contains no sex, violence, or swearing. Has lovable characters promoting it, and is challenging to play. In fact it is the ideal Christmas present for young and old alike.

Okay it may say for ages 3 and up on the box,

but I can assure you that table 4, Toby the tram engine, is not that easy. The other three tables have Thomas, the easiest, Percy, and James. Difficulty can be increased by altering the tilt of the table. The steeper the gradient, the faster the steel ball travels.

A1200 & CD32

This, and other features such as sound and keyboard controls, are altered from within the Fat Controller's office. Here you can set up which keys control the flippers - if you are playing on an A1200, and so on. There is on-line help, but you

will find the slim booklet that accompany's the game's two disks very useful. A CD32 version is also available.

Not only do you get to read how difficult it is for PC owners to get up and running, but you do get a full run down on all the features of the four tables. What to light up and how many points it scores. How ramps and tunnels work. What ball traps do (painful) and how roll-over gates affect your score.

Multiplayer

Up to eight players can take part, saving their high scores to disk. Games can be paused at any time, which is very useful if somebody needs to go wee-wees. Although I think players will tend to hold on till they lose as it is such an addictive game. Disk access is only required to load a particular table, so once a game is in progress the floppy can be removed by a responsible person for safety.

Apart from the table controls, flippers and ball release, most other features are switched using the function keys or via the mouse. Which, you must admit, is much easier for youngsters to get to grips with rather than trying to find what they want on the arcane QWERTY keyboard.

The game's action is smooth and the flippers respond quickly, but Pinball Illusions will still reign supreme for the experienced player. For youngsters, especially those mad about Thomas and co, this is ideal. The only big gripe I had was the time it takes the software to recognise the F-key that starts the game.

Conclusion

Colleagues here at ***AUI*** were queuing up to play, which proves that they are all big kids at heart and that there is nothing wrong with this game. Our most enthusiastic Thomas fan, young Luke (nearly 4), signed away his father's life to have this as an early Christmas present. ***AUI***

VERDICT

GRAPHICS	94%
SOUND	88%
GAMEPLAY	94%

Overall Rating 93%

INFO

Thomas the Tank Engine & Friends Pinball
Alternative Software.
A1200 £16.99 • CD32 £19.99 • PC £16.99

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THE PD STAKEOUT

The Public Domain scene continues to provide a substantial support for the Amiga, as David Ward reports.

Scoring

The marks awarded to each PD disk are based purely upon its own merits and, of course, our personal views. Value for money and reliability are also taken into account as well as features and quality of the software.

Compatibility

The PD disks reviewed in this issue were tested on an A1200 with a basic 2 megs of chip RAM. Check with your PD supplier that the disks you are ordering are compatible with your Amiga.

PD or ShareWare?

All freely distributable software comes under the rather deceptive umbrella of "public domain". Quite a lot of this software is, in fact, shareware. Shareware means that if you like the software, or use it regularly, the author will request a reasonable donation from £5 to £20. There is usually a note on the disk informing you if the software is shareware or regular PD.

Whether or not you send a donation to the author depends totally upon your level of conscience and morals. Remember, if you send a donation to the author, you may receive an updated version of the software. Even if you don't receive an update, you will have given the author the incentive to continue contributing into the public domain.

FALLING DOWN

F1 Licenceware

This is a neat puzzle game written in Amos. The story behind the game seems a little bizarre as half the population of a planet went off-world and turned nasty. They do, don't they? They then came back and made life miserable for those that were left behind. (What can you expect from off-world travellers. Have you seen Apollo 13?)

A passing traveller decided to sort out this evil lot by building a complex tower into which the planet's population was put - both good and bad. By pulling the floors from underneath them you cause the inhabitants to fall down, hence the name of the game. Keep the good (red) guys away from the basement and all's fine. Drop the bad (blue) guys down there and wave them goodbye - permanently.

Unlike many games you probably won't need a cheat for this, but it should give you plenty of hours of entertainment. You'll have played quite a few worse games in your time. We have.

86%

MASH

PD Gold

No, this is nothing to do with the classic TV series. Remember Tanx? The game where two tanks tried to destroy each other across varied terrain. You versus the computer. MASH is almost the same except that you get ground troops as well. And ground troops are the appropriate words, for your foot sloggers are potatoes. Yes, the tuberous veggies. And they are armed to the eye teeth.

Do spuds have eye teeth? Of course they do. They certainly have eyes. Just look in your vegetable cupboard after a week or two, so they must have eye teeth too. The tatties arms in Mash are bazookas firing all manner of ordnance. The same for the accompanying tanks.

The object of the game is to get to the enemy base before he gets to you. Wow! That's a new idea isn't it? The terrain can prove difficult, but the tank can blast its way through, while your spud men can become sappers and build bridges or dig tunnels. While the concept is not vastly original the execution is very entertaining. The game is highly appropriate to play on a machine equipped with custom chips!

84%

Text Engine v5.0

Pixel Digital

Hmm... a word processor for £5. Seems reasonable to me. Text Engine is a very powerful little text editor that's been written entirely in Assembler. This latest version has a bang up-to-date GUI interface that now uses your own Workbench preferences and fonts.

There is a 36,000 word spell checker that gives rather too many useful suggestions, but you can replace dodgy words simply with a button press. The previous release required you to type in the replacement word yourself.

There is a full cut and paste facility, along with lots of options for different text types - italics, bold, etc. The length of a document is only limited by the amount of memory your machine has, and the same goes for the clipboard buffer too.

This is another excellent product that would not be out of place in anyone's library of software. You might, of course, already possess a word processor, but nevertheless for the cost of Text Engine, negligible really, it could well be worth you getting it and giving it a try as a possible alternative.

88%

Friday Night Pool

Jon Harris

Pool equals Trouble according to a song from a Hollywood musical, and they were quite right. The trouble here is that you can spend hours and hours and hours playing this game - even with the strip option turned off. Yes, this has a stripper and you can choose male or female topless opponents. (We're not so keen on topless males)

The games can be played against the computer or another, human, player. The table and balls are customizable, and play is easy to control via keyboard or joystick. Fellow ***AUI*** staff were amazed when I managed to pot two balls with one trick shot. This proves that I led a misspent youth - and am leading an even more ill-spent adulthood, perhaps.

Even for those who are put off by the numbered balls that you see in Hustler-type movies, Friday Night Pool on the Amiga is a fun game and provides plenty of entertainment. But watch out if you have something else to do as it may never get done.

88%

Chanques

PD Gold

A very well thought out puzzle game from Mexico, which is not a country from which we get loads of software for the Amiga. Written using Amos by Ramses Moreno, with graphics and sound by Tonatiuh Moreno, you must control your three characters - each has special powers - so that you can get the McGuffin into a sort of warp door. Once that is done your characters get teleported to the next level.

Beware the traps and the time limit, neatly depicted by using a lightening sky behind a farmyard scene. When the cock crows, that's yer lot.

Perhaps as the countries in Latin America begin to forge ahead economically we shall see more of their software reaching the rest of the world. What about a game called "Montezuma's Revenge"? Or is that a crap idea?

94%

Fiasco v1.0

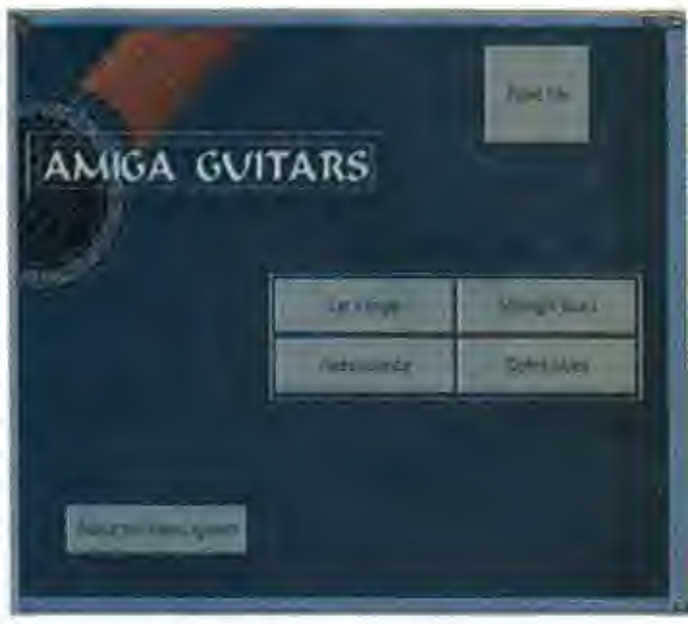
Pixel Digital

Pixel Digital is a fully featured database. Yes. One that you could use without worrying about its limitations. This is high quality Public Domain material. There is no need to register, it is absolutely free - well you have to pay for the disk, umm... that's it really.

Finding this quality of product circulating in PD is very rewarding for it gives anyone the opportunity to learn about and use a well-designed and very usable database without having to fork out lumps of cash for it. You may later want to go on to a full commercial product, but what is more likely, is that Fiasco will satisfy your needs.

85%

Amiga Guitars



Pixel Digital

Four superb music tracks featuring acoustic guitar. We all stopped work here at ***AUI*** so that we could appreciate the quality. This is an excellent grouping of Amiga music and well worth owning if you want to know just how good music can be on our favourite computer.

96%

Airshow

RAF fast jets

Spitfire Bf109

Seasoft

Seasoft have brought out four sets of disks, each with an aviation theme. Airshow has ten pictures taken from videos shot during the 1993 display season. All the old favourites are here, from the Fairey Swordfish to the Red Arrows. The latter showing what they can do. Most of the other pictures are of static aircraft.

There must be a market for things of the air. However, for fans of the Top Gun persuasion, these disks could be an ideal present for themselves, or somebody who will appreciate them.

"RAF Fast Jets" is a useful guide to what the RAF operates today. Technical details of each aircraft type, along with information on armaments, are given when you click on the appropriate icon. Silhouettes are shown for each type, plus camouflage and colour schemes expertly drawn by John Dell. Not exactly a 'Janes', but it is certainly a lot, lot, cheaper.

In the old days, the Soviets would have paid a fortune for this, and John le Carré would have written a best seller about it called Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Software Programmer.

Both Spitfire and Messerschmitt Bf109 are hyperbook documents that give the background and technical details of these two famous WWII fighters. Well illustrated, the only thing that lets the disks down is Hyperbook itself, Gold Disk's rather chunky (clunky) 'multimedia' utility.

Nevertheless, the enthusiasts of these Forties rivals will revel in the nostalgia factor. After all, the Battle of Britain was won and lost by them.

85%

Lethal Formula

Raven Software

As usual some mega-corporation has stolen a secret formula and you, as Professor Endsworth, must retrieve it from their spaceship before it is sent off to worlds unknown.

Created using the Graphical Adventure Creator (GRAC), I was quite surprised to find Lethal Formula to be an absorbing game. The graphics aren't too bad either. While it doesn't really reach the presentation standards of commercial games, it is, as always, in this type of game, the addictiveness of the gameplay that matters and Lethal Formula, in spite of sounding like the kind of Mel Gibson film that you would go out of your way to avoid, has its fair share of 'absorbtion' power.

82%

PRO SERIES BETTING

Ali Prior

The word is "dazzling" (well, his letters do come on day-glo paper) which describes the work of Ali Prior, whose excellently put together betting prediction packages must be made known to you.

If you are a person who likes a little flutter then Mr. Prior has a program for you. Post him an S.A.E (25p) and 2 blank disks and he will send you the demo version of whatever you want - Football, Horses, Lottery, or Greyhounds.

The intelligent interface used in his packages is very well designed and simple to use. The only flaw being the amount of data you have to enter, especially for the pools predictor, before you can get meaningful results.

As someone from a family whose main hobby was the dogs and horses, I can appreciate how much easier this software would have made our lives - we might have won more often! (Or even occasionally!)

Ali Prior does not tell us if he is a millionaire yet, and since I do not bet, I cannot comment on whether the Pro series will actually make YOU or the bookie richer. Nevertheless, if you a punter, then you need all the power you can get on your side and these programs at least might give you a sporting chance. And remember, roulette tables with more than one zero are death! And so are blackjack games unless you can count the cards.

94%

Intruders WOSP

Mon PD

Another music disk, this time from Poland. Warsaw to be exact. While we would like to encourage the development of any kind of software for the Amiga and particularly from unusual sources, and Poland is certainly not too familiar to us, this has to considered well on the boring side of the divide between east and west. Yawn is, our Polish speaking ***AUI*** staff member tells us, a Polish word meaning, "Don't give up your day job." So that's what we say about Intruders WOSP. Yawn.

50%

Techno-1

Graham Osbourne

I know what it is like working on disk based magazines, so full marks to Graham Osbourne for making the effort. This is a two disk issue (No.3) which contains game reviews, PD, reviews of serious products, a cover story, swap shop, and freebie software.

The interface leaves a lot to be desired. It's not one of those glitzy demo types, but rather a few icons on Workbench. However, I prefer disk mags to be this way, but with better layout and icons. It looks too much like 1.3.

The reviews could be beefed up a bit and more use made of a spell checker. Graham, invest £5 in Text Engine 5.0, and let's see what you can do for issue 4.

65%

Vark 9

The Vark CLI†Utilities disks have to be among the best when it comes to value for money. A simple menu front end gives you access to five lists of Shell only utilities and their associated document files. The 30 odd programs range from disk speed testers to programs designed to patch requesters, grabs screens, randomize modules, and create installation scripts. There's even a sound sampling program.

82%

Charley Cat 12 - Cowboy Cats

Roberta Smith DTP

A six disk animation set that requires lots of RAM, 2Mb to be precise. Charley Cat 12 has been split into 4 episodes which prompt you as to what disk needs to be inserted - i.e. 1, 2, 1, 3, 1, 3, 1, 2, 1, 2, 1, 2, 1, 2, 1, 2, 1, 2, 1, 2, 1, 2, 6, 1, 6, 1, 6, 1, 6, 1, 6, 1, 6, and 1 just to get the first episode to load and run. It lasts about a minute and a quarter.

A 'Cinemascope' production, Cowboy Cats has just the right sort of feeling to it. It reminded of those spaghetti westerns of the 60s that mixed comedy with violence - not that there is much in the way of bloodshed. Anthony Whitaker, the artist/animator, is no Sam Peckinpah. Enjoyable.

89%

Squawky Talky

The funny thing is that I have seen quite a few requests from people who wanted their Amiga to regain its powers of speech after they upgraded from 1.3 to 2.1 and above. Due to some dispute with Commodore the software that used to do this was removed from the 'improved' operating systems.

Squawky Talky does not give you those powers back. Instead there are a number of little programs that improve the voice of your Amiga, but you will need those important libraries - translator and narrator first.

"This is your Amiga talking..." Ah, those were the good old days, especially for people whose eyesight wasn't that good.

78%

PSSST

PSSST is a platform game which has been produced in tribute to the old Spectrum title by Ultimate. Guide your 'robot' to the various spraycans and zap those bugs. Each aerosol has its own particular powers - some good, some bloody useless. AGA machines only. (There was, believe it or not, a film called "PSSST", a free copy of this game to the first reader who writes and tells us who starred in it.)

78%

Contacts for PD reviewed in this issue

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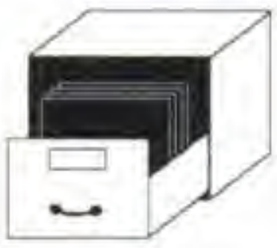

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Write to Reply

Bud Vennos, still worn out from his bulging letters bag from last month, is back to his normal size – for now.

Dear *AUI*,
I am writing in complaint of your Coverdisks. As a result of the poor quality and service I have received I have decided not to purchase your magazine any more. I'll explain my problem. Firstly about two months ago I bought your magazine and to my surprise the two disks had hundreds of read/write errors, so in true fashion I returned the disks only to find the two returned again with the same problem.

Yet again I returned the disks and about a week later I received two more replacements. I was disgusted when yet again they has read/write errors.

I threw the disks away and thought that I wouldn't buy your magazine again, but as your November 95 issue had some good things on the disks I purchased your magazine. When I got home I tried the first disk and was puzzeled (sic) why it read "DFO:///". When I tried to remove the disk from the drive it wouldn't come out. After removing the disk minus its speed lock with a pair of plyers and have just popped them into an envelope to the return address. (keyed in as written ed). I have now decided that I no longer want the problem of returning disks and I am no longer intending to purchase your magazine.

Yours faithfully,
Jason Williams
Lancs

Dear *AUI*,
I am writing to you to express my disappointment over the October issue of AUI and particularly the Coverdisk. I have not bought an Amiga magazine for some months and *AUI* was the first since I bought a second-hand 600 recently.

The moans are: Chaos Pro won't run, nor will Willy's Weirdy Nightmare as my 600 has `only' 1Mb. MP Image won't work (needs 0S3.0+ as does Chaos Pro). Datatypes? Why, when they're specifically aimed for just a small percentage of people? MIDit might work but I don't use MIDI, another minority I suspect. YACDP1.2, MMB Commodity, FlipIt and a clock - are you scraping the bottom of the barrel or what? Bratwurst - AGA only. Virus checker needs more RAM, the list is endless.

It could be said that it was my choice to buy the magazine this is true. However, I would not have done had the cover stated that the majority of programs won't work on the majority of machines.

If AGA owners were consulted I dare say most would prefer a separate magazine - or at least separate coverdisks. As for the magazine, well, it's dull to say the least but I won't rant on about that (yet!).

If I buy virtually anything from a shop that doesn't live up to its manufacturers claims I can demand a refund and that is what I am doing now. Please return to me £3.99 + postage and I will return the magazine to you. Please don't ignore this letter or I'll write constantly to other Amiga magazines until *AUI* standards return to the level they used to be!!

Yours vaguely faithfully,
S.A. Hanrahan
Kent

Dear Messrs. Williams and Hanrahan,
First - and probably more important than anything else I am going to write, if you have a technical problem with ***AUI*** *SuperDisks, or anything else, why not take the sensible course of action that many readers, it begins to seem like thousands, follow. Write to the Amiga Answer Machine, that Guru of Gurus, Professor Andy Eskeleson? He's the one who might save you an awful lot of heartburn. He answers loads of disk problems to the obvious satisfaction of* ***AUI*** *readers.*

Write to Reply, or even the Editor, are just the wrong places to address your moans and groans and swear you'll never buy the damn magazine again. And I'll tell you why. Because more than likely whatever trouble you are having is curable - but not by me, I'm an ignoramus, only by Prof. Eskelson.

He's seen it all before. He even has a special section for disk problems which turn out, as often as not, not to do with the disk itself, but only with the way it's being used. You fall into that category, to a certain extent and instead of whining, get it down on paper, disk, or email, and solve the problem. Or would that just not fit in with your negative views of life? Would perhaps solving the problem just be too much of a contradiction to your longheld views that the world is out to screw you?

Second, ***AUI*** *is not one of those magazines which rather pretentiously bind themselves up in plastic and make you guess what's in them. You can open up* ***AUI*** *and riffle through its clearly printed pages. Every time I go into a newsagent I do it and so do millions of others. Why aren't you among them? If you think what's there in the hallowed pages of AUI into which so much work is poured is dull, don't buy it. Nobody is holding a gun to your head.*

With some justification you might say that you can't see what's on the SuperDisks. But, come on, the contents of these much sweated over productions are listed on their labels and also there are three or four pages in the magazine every month that go into fine detail about them and compatibility is clearly shown. What do you want, to be able to try the disks out and then send them back if you, in your wisdom and exquisite taste, decide that all that work is just not what you are feeling like keeping today.

Which brings me to the idiotic suggestion that because you have decided you don't, after seeing, trying, even using and possibly storing or backing up what's on the disks, really fancy

them or the magazine - which you clearly have had the opportunity to read,

that you should get your money back. What kind of world do you live in? Marks and Spencers may generally take back articles that they have sold, but even they would look very much askance at having to refund the price of an item that had been used for its appropriate purpose and then the buyer decided he/she just didn't like it and wanted the money back. We make no manufacturers claim that isn't justified.

Grow up, you should be old enough to be responsible for yourself and your buying decisions. Of course, no-one should be persuaded to buy something that does not conform to its description and such cases are rightly covered by the Trades Description Act. You try saying that you can't get the disk to work, when thousands and thousands of ***AUI*** *readers can, or that you don't like what is on the disks or in the magazine, explained at length in the Contents, to your local Trading Standards Officer and see what kind of response you get.*

As I said before, grow up. And the joke is, that if neither of you ever buy ***AUI*** *again, how are you going to know what the reply to your letters were?*

Dear Sir/Madam,
I have just started my GCSE Design and realization course work piece and need some research material. I am researching computer workstations/computer desks and would very much appreciate it if you could send me some pictures and information and anything else on this.

Please send anything that might help to 15, Winslade Road, Harestock, Winchester, Hants SO22 6LN I have enclosed some stamps to help with postage.

Yours sincerely,
Rupert Neale

Dear Rupert,
I am all in favour of education, providing it doesn't give you too much knowledge which, as everyone knows, is even more dangerous than just a little knowledge.

You clearly have a little knowledge and want to have more. Now should we provide it for you? Should we take your very kindly sent stamps, stick them on an envelope and fill the envelope with photos and other delights on computer workstations etc.? Should we?

I don't want to be unkind - I keep that for more intimate occasions than my literary outpourings - but it's not our job to make up collections of photos, information etc., when it's you who need, indeed, must do the research for yourself. The whole point of such educational projects is to test your ability to assemble and to use appropriately the material available.

Yes, there can be a certain measure of admiration for you if you can get away with someone else doing the donkey work for you. But you are unlikely to achieve that kind of cooperation from magazine people anyway. The Editor has enough trouble, he will tell you, when he wants others to "assist" him when it isn't really something the others should be doing. You writing to us and asking for us to do that for you is, to say the least, optimistic in the extreme.

There are many companies who would be delighted to supply you with plenty of material, companies such as Silicon Graphics or Hewlett Packard ache to have their products publicised. There are libraries full of material just waiting for you to go and dig it out.

That's what research is, isn't it? Finding the material for yourself. No, don't turn to magazines for your research information. Their job is to provide sufficient information and enlightenment for their readers who pay sometimes quite high prices for it. Don't ask the magazines to do something they were not created for. The best of luck with your project, but it's up to you to do it - and the research for it in the proper places and in the proper way.

However, as your letter was a nice polite one, and you sent the postage, we are returning your stamps to you and also a copy of this magazine so you can read and possibly find some information you need.

Also I've printed your address so that anyone who has any information that they think might be useful can send it to you. Are you listening HP and SGI?

Dear *AUI*,
I was fascinated by your informed article in *AUI* NewsFile November issue on our television campaign for Escom computers.

You are right to say that the Summer is not renowned for high TV audiences - you may not be aware that it is also not renowned for high costs either and so excellent value can be achieved, (you remember the saying about those people who know the cost of everything and the value of nothing).

Also the Summer would seem a good time to run a Summer sale don't you think?

Anyway, our campaign that nobody saw was seen by over 75% of ABC1 adults (they're the ones with the money to buy our computers) in our key sales areas. As for telling them about the new stories as well - our philosophy is to get as much across in 30 seconds as possible - by the way we now have over 200 stores nationwide and we haven't finished yet.

Escom on TV? - very possibly - and on again in November, nationwide you will be pleased to know.

Yours sincerely,
David Braddock

Dear David Braddock,
I gather from the letterheading you are the advertising agency for Escom, which is why you are obviously so knowledgeable about what went on with the "Summer sale campaign" on which the NewsFile team commented.

I am sure you are quite right in saying that Summer is a good time for a Summer sale and also a season when the costs are low. But using the low cost argument as a justification is like saying that a fisherman goes to the river and uses a fly to catch a trout.

This may be a satisfactory procedure if all you want is one trout, but if you are in the mass market, you get what you pay for. You have to go out using large nets and scour the seas.

If you want large sales then prime time TV costs are high, but they do help achieve them. And you can't manage that when people are outdoors, away on holiday, or just not watching TV - all of which very likely happens in that most delightful of seasons, when the living is easy and, of course, the real fish are jumping... Summertime.

Escom's advertising campaign for its shops and PCs is now a familiar one. There are those who have told me they think the whole concept corny to the extreme. I'm not qualified to comment on that, but what I do think is that advertising is about changing people's buying habits and the most effective way that is done is through repetition. If, as you suggest, the campaign is to be continued, and at the time of writing this it had not yet appeared again, then the sheer repeating of any advertising should have its effect. You might well then get your 75% of ABC1 adults that you cite as having been achieved in the Summer.

I am sorry to say that I just don't believe any figures that would tell me that 75% of ABC1 adults are even in the vicinity of a TV set in the Summer. How many millions of UK citizens go abroad then?

What concerns me, and I should think most Amiga users too, is the idea that low cost equals what we would want, quality marketing from Escom.

Write to reply

CONTINUED

And that may well be no fault of yours. Escom came on as the saviour of the Amiga, if, in its drive to sell PCs, it chooses the cheapest time of the year, what hope has the Amiga of getting the real power of marketing muscle from Escom that Amiga users for years yearned for from Commodore?

What we would like to hear from you, as Escom's advertising agency and from Escom itself, is not that shoestring ad times are the order of the day, but that the money spent will equal the need. That national marketing campaigns will be run for the Amiga not in Summer or Winter, but in such a way that the Amiga becomes again a household - or professional - name. Let's have 75% or more of ABC1s and all the others too knowing that Escom is really behind the Amiga and then we'll believe your campaigns are successful.

Dear *AUI*,
I have been reading the comments of other users with interest, but I am confused about the comments being made about the Amiga. Now that Amigas have been released everybody seems to be more depressed and thinks the Amiga is dead. I have just moved here from America and the overall feeling about the Amiga is totally different. I do not think that the Amiga is dead, a testimony to this is that there are still over at least 5 million users.

A computer like this just does not die, sure many people are saying how unadvanced the Amiga is compared to the PCs, but that is just not true. If you were to compare the Amiga to your average PC there is only one aspect that the PC will win on and that is speed. I work on and off at a computer graphic company, they use Pentium PCs, really heavy hardware and have one A4000.

Comparing their £10,000 PCs to the £1,200 A4000 you can see very little difference only that it takes longer to render on an A4000.

Don't let crap 95 (Windoze 95) trick you into thinking that the PC is a superior format, eventually people will realise how good the Amiga is.

Already people are buying A1200s which are heavy in demand. The Amiga has just been brought back and already people are seeing doom, remember anything is possible, people were saying just a few months ago that Doom could not be done on the Amiga, well look now! It is going to be a tough struggle, but Amiga will rise Phoenix like from the ashes of Commodore! Thank you for listening.

Timo Paul,
Bucks

Dear Timo,
The prophets of doom, as opposed to the players of Doom, are often wrong. People often see life through their own particular spectacles. If they are of a positive nature, it's rose coloured opticals time. If they have the flow of negativity running through their veins then woe is us, it's a black day today and tomorrow's even worse.

You may well be right that the Amiga is going to rise phoenix-like from the ashes of Commodore, but nothing happens until you will it. Quoting the famous Antonio Gramschi, as I have done before, "Pessimism of the intellect, optimism of the will" is not a bad motto for those who know while the prospect may look bleak, success can be achieved if you want it enough and believe in it enough. Most of all you have to MAKE it happen.

Unfortunately, those who most have the interests of the Amiga at heart have least power over its eventual fate. That will be decided by Escom with the help of people and organisations like that of the previous writer, Mr. David Braddock. But as the ant said, never give up and never give in, just keep pushing - and down came the rubber plant.

Dear *AUI*,
Paul Czesak from Sweden has trouble locating a supplier of transfer paper and ink (October 1995 issue). Paul doesn't have to go far as the USA, because in The Netherlands there are several companies that are able to fulfil his wishes. One is : Transform, Looweg 12-b, 7741 EH Coevorden, Tel. 05240-162432, Fax 05240-14656. I came across them in the latest issue of Amiga Magazine (NL).

By the way, there is an ad on page 73: Amigraph, where the (Belgian) address is spelt Tijl Vilenspiegelstraat. I think it must be: Tijl Uilenspiegelstraat.

Kind Regards,
Dick Waanders,
Almelo (The Netherlands)

Dear Dick,
Thanks for the help with the address for Paul Czesak. There is always an Amiga user out there somewhere who knows the answer and more often than not we hear from them.

Our Dutch spelling is not likely to be the best we can boast of, so I am sure you are right in making the correction. Thanks for that too. Wasn't Tijl Uilenspiegel someone important. Anyone know who he was?

Dear *AUI*,
Thank you for SuperDisk No.69 and 70. I have won £10 on the Lottery this week and this (£1 postal order) is my 10% of the contribution.

I hope this goes into the AUI Fund for Staff Holidays in the Bahamas.

Yours faithfully,
YKO

Dear YKO,
Thanks a lot for the contribution which must have come from the Lottery program that was on the SuperDisk.

We think it's extremely generous of you. We haven't yet decided whether to frame it - it is after all the first contribution we have received, though now we expect to be flooded by them - or send it to a better cause. You see people like Martin Witton and Anthony Mael get so much in expenses these days that the Fund will only need to cater for the impoverished among us - like me.

Nevertheless, don't stop sending us the tithe, especially if you touch the big one, as a French girl friend of mine used to say. I could spend lots of time in the Caribbean enjoying the local fauna with a million or so in the tax-free Bank of Bahamas.

By the way, YKO, you are not a relative of the guy who invented the famous jelly, are you? Now there's a universally popular product and it must be worth millions. Can you make a 10% contribution of the profits that - as they say - come from it? ***AUI***

Send your letters to:
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